MILITARY MODELLING

15th December 2006

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Information and diary dates

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Wrong number!

In our feature on the Airbrush Company's courses a fax number was listed for contacting the company and not their phone number which is: **08700 660445**.
Apologies to readers and the Airbrush Company for this slip.

Chester Model Club

The Chester Model Club meet on the last Tuesday of every month at 8pm in the upstairs function room of the Bull and Stirrup Hotel on Upper Northgate Street behind the old bus terminal in Chester. There is car parking behind the hotel. Chester Model Club is a small group and wish to expand with other like-minded enthusiasts and children with parents are welcome. For further details about the Club telephone Frank on 07985 901515 or e-mail franklever2000@yahoo.co.uk

British Model Soldier Society

No serious collector can afford to miss the auctions organized by the British Model Soldier Society! These take place twice a year and 200 lots pass under the hammer in a couple of hours. Some fine collections have been seen in recent years and whether you are looking for Britain's models, a Freddie Green conversion or just some rather battered pieces to restore to their former glory, this is the place to find them.

The next auction will take place in Napier Hall, Hide Place, Vincent Square, London SW1, on Friday 19th January 2007. The Hall is open for viewing from 5pm and the auction commences at 6pm. There is no buyers' premium, but you must be a member of the BMSS if you wish to attend. In addition to entry to the two auctions your subscription will bring you four, full-colour Bulletins and four Bulletin Extras a year and access to the other services provided by the Society. For further information on the auction, please contact John Ruddle on 0208 979 7137. For enquiries about BMSS membership, please contact the Treasurer, Paul Newman on 01895 832 757.

Sword and Lance 2007

The Darlington Military Modelling Society are honoured to announce three times Euro Militaire Best of Show winner Marijn Van Gils will be the guest of honour at their forthcoming Sword and Lance 2007 show to be held on the 14th of April at the Arts centre, Vane terrace, Darlington. Marijn will be presenting a modelling seminar, which will give modellers a unique insight as to how Marijn produces his superb models. As part of the seminar he will be explaining and demonstrating his award winning techniques and hosting a modellers' question and answer forum. Tickets to the seminar will carry a small charge of £2 to cover administration costs and due to the limited spaces available entrance to the seminar will be by ticket only, bookable in advance on a 'first come first served' basis.

Tickets can be obtained by e-mailing Steve Kirtley at stephen@skirtley.fsnet.co.uk

In conjunction with the above forum there will be Sword and Lance's well-respected open competition and model displays by both clubs and well-known modellers, which will include the 2006 Euro Militaire Best of Show winner Phil Stutcinskas. A wide range of specialist trade stands will also be in attendance along with an on-site bar and refreshment facilities. Any further information regarding Sword and Lance will be posted in this magazine's announcements section or please contact Colin Holmes on 01325 489801 colin.holmes@whsmithnet.co.uk or Lester Plaskitt Tel: 079811309893.

The Plastic Warrior Show 2007

The 22nd annual Plastic Warrior Show will be held at its usual venue next year, on Saturday 10th February at the Queen Charlotte Hall, Richmond Adult Community College, Parkshot, Richmond in Surrey. This is the oldest and longest running toy soldier show in Europe, and is still the only show in the world that features exclusively plastic toy soldiers and model figures. Traders and collectors come from all over the world for this event and for some of them it is the only show they ever attend.

Many collectors take a table at the Show to sell off their spare figures. Entry for Plastic Warrior subscribers is 10am, whereas entry to the general public is 11am. There are numerous door prizes generously donated by the plastic soldier trade. For further details, early entry tickets, or to book a table please contact Plastic Warrior Tel: 01483 722778. Fax: 01483 772723. pw.editor@ntlworld.com www.plasticwarrior.com

BMSS Northern

The British Model Soldier Society (Northern Area) meets, in conjunction with the Manchester Association of Military Modelling Societies, each month in Sale, Greater Manchester, at the Sale Moor Methodist Church Hall. The hall is in Northenden Road, Sale, at its junction with Worthington Road, easily accessible by bus and close to the M60 motorway.

In 2007 meetings will be held on the third Saturday of every month with the exception of the April meetings, which will be on the second Saturday (14th). Meetings are from 12 noon to 4pm and are not restricted to BMSS members; anyone interested in military modelling is welcome to attend. For further details please contact the BMSS Area Representative, Tom Cunningham, Tel: 0161 499 2803.

Long Island 2007

RepLIcon annual IPMS/Long Island Scale Model Society's Model Show and Convention will be held on 31st March 2007 at Freeport Recreation Centre, Freeport New York, which is minutes away from Meadowbrook Parkway and within 20 Minutes of two air museums. Featured will be 'Open System' judging (multiple Gold, Silver and Bronze awards possible) for Armour categories. Help us celebrate our 35th Anniversary as an IPMS Chapter with our biggest show ever. Contact; Steve Andreano Contest Chairperson Tel: 516 632 5418 or check out the Website http://longislandscalemodel.tripod.com/

Abingdon Model Show 2007

Next year's Abingdon Model Show will be organized by IPMS Abingdon Branch and held on Sunday 1st April at Larkmead School, Faringdon Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire. The Show will be open from 10am until 4.30pm. For further information contact Simon Tel: 079208 75480 or Alan Tel: 077666 91207.

BMMS 2007 & 2008

Following the success of this year's Great Model Soldier Show, the British Model Soldier Society is already looking to the future. The National Committee of the Society has agreed that it is important to settle on a venue and a date in the calendar so that other organizations are aware of these and clashes can be avoided.

In an ideal world the Show would have returned next year to its traditional date of the fourth Saturday in April, but unfortunately, due to a prior booking, this has not been possible. Accordingly the Great British Model Soldier Show will take place in the Edward and Alexandra Suite at the Royal National Hotel, Russell Square on Saturday, 21st April 2007 and the following year on Saturday 26th April 2008 at the same venue.

It is intended that the event will be a focus for the very best of all aspects of military modelling and collecting in this country. Alongside the now traditional open competitions there will be superb displays and demonstrations as well as an opportunity for modellers to stock up on their needs at the trade stands. This will be one of the key events in the military modelling calendar, so please note these dates now! Traders wishing to take up one of the limited spaces at this high profile event should contact Alex Riches Tel: 0298 698 7334 as soon as possible. For any other information, please contact Michael Creese Tel: 01728 602746.

Radio Waves to Cyber Space

Well-known newsreader and announcer Peter Donaldson, whose voice is familiar to millions of listeners of Radio 4, can now be heard on www.collectingfriends.com the new online community he's co-founded. However, unlike his usual work, which brings with it what calls 'the comforting anonymity of radio', his Internet presence will also be visual. Now a face can be added to the distinctive voice familiar to his fans for more than 30 years. "Collecting Friends' is a collectors' community where like-minded enthusiasts can meet, exchange views, or find that long-sought collectable," said Peter. "Subscribers to the site can also make contact with recognized experts across a myriad of interests." Author and collector Arthur Ward originated the project and was soon joined by a number of other specialists in the toy, modelling, memorabilia, sci-fi, and military collectables fields. Readers may recognize Arthur's name; he wrote the official history of Airfix and, more recently its companion volume *Classic Kits*. In fact, whilst working on his new web site, Arthur has written two new books to be published early next year by The Crowood Press. The first, *Buying and Selling Military Collectables*, is aimed at militaria enthusiasts, the second concerns TV & Film inspired toys from the 1960s and 1970s. However, Arthur's main focus is his collectors' community. "Collecting Friends is intended to complement familiar auction sites by providing a resource that among other things identifies likely values," he said. "We've aimed to give true collectors what they've been waiting for - a site where they can share opinions, solve some collecting conundrums or locate that precious missing item." With a core market consisting of 'Baby Boomers' and those 40 to 60-year-olds most familiar with his reassuringly authoritative tones, Peter Donaldson and his co-founders are confident that their online society will fill a void amongst e-commerce start-ups.

Well-known newsreader and announcer Peter Donaldson, whose voice is familiar to millions of listeners of BBC Radio 4 can now be heard on www.collectingfriends.com the new online community he's co-founded. See Radio Waves to Cyber Space.

South Cheshire Militaire

Next year's South Cheshire Militaire will be held at the Oakley Centre in Crewe, Cheshire on Sunday 25th February. The Militaire will open to the public at 10am and entrance is £3.50 adults and £1.50 children. There is no charge for children under five years. Further details: show@southcheshiremilitaire.co.uk www.southcheshiremilitaire.co.uk or Phil Podmore Tel: 01270 256880.

MM Back Numbers in USA

If you live in the United States of America and are looking for back numbers or a specific back number issue of Military Modelling, please note that a reliable and alternative source for back numbers can be found at the VLS Corporation. Issues go back quite a few years and beyond the back numbers available from our own stocks. If your need an issue missing from you collection or a specific issue then have a look at VLS's Website: www.modelmeca.com for back numbers currently available or Tel: 636 356 4888. This service is not only limited to the USA but is a worldwide facility.

Trucks 'n' Tracks 2007

Trucks 'n' Tracks the International Vehicle Modelling Show returns to its usual February slot and will be held at the Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone, Kent over the weekend of 24th - 25th February. The Show will be open 10am to 5pm on Saturday and 9am until 4pm on the Sunday. A two-day entrance ticket is available at £8 adults and £5 children, (14 Euros) the entrance fee includes a free prize draw ticket. The model competitions have again been sponsored by the War & Peace Show and are free to enter. For further information contact Trucks 'n'Tracks, 2 Freemantle Road, Folkestone, Kent CT20 3PY. Tel/fax: 01303 850801. trucksntracks@hotmail.com More details, including information about the competitions are on the Trucks 'n' Tracks Website: www.trucksntracks.com

EURO MILITAIRE 2007 Countdown...

You're probably counting down the last few days to Christmas, but we'll also be counting down the months to Euro Militaire which will be held over the weekend of 22nd - 23rd September at its usual venue in the Leas Cliff Hall at Folkestone on the Channel coast.

This will be the 23rd Euro Militaire and as always we welcome your suggestions no matter how big - or small, to improve Euro Militaire to the benefit of modellers and traders. Additional competitions have been added because of modeller input and participation, so we do listen to what you tell us you would like to see and we do listen to suggestions. Drop a line to the Editor or e-mail him ken.jones@encanta.co.uk

Anyone sending in any *really useful* suggestions or ideas may find them published here over the next eight months or so... and maybe also find they have some complementary tickets to next year's show. Let's be hearing from you...

DESPATCH

Readers' Letters and E-mails

● The Editor welcomes readers' letters and e-mails for publication which must always be accompanied by the writer's full name and address. The address will be published in full if the letter or e-mail is interpreted as a request for information to the readership. Otherwise, only the writer's full name will be published.

● Letters and e-mails are not, under any circumstances, altered or severely edited; however, they may be shortened because of space limitations. The Editor is not necessarily in agreement with the views expressed in published readers' correspondence.

● Letters and e-mails to the Editor intended for publication should be addressed to:

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● E-mail: ken.jones@encanta.co.uk

Radio Times

Hi Ken,
I've just read through issue 12 of ***Military Modelling*** and was most impressed with the good mix of articles, most of which were of interest to me.

I have a Cromwell Churchill AVRE to build so the article by Mark Bannerman will be of considerable use to me when I get round to building it!

The article 'Radio Times' by Alex Hill is absolutely fascinating to me, as I built a similar model a few years ago from the Plus Models conversion set. This involved manufacturing the whole interior, so I am most impressed with the work he has done on the Resicast kit. Most of my sets came from photos on the Internet, Louis Melstrees' 'Wireless for the Warrior' site being the most useful.

He mentions the 'bracket and box' in the driver's cab for which he does not know the purpose. An educated guess tells me that it is a cradle and associated junction box for a field phone (Tele 'F', 'L' or 'J'?), perhaps used to wake up the driver for a crash move? We had very similar cradles for field phones in the Land Rover FFL (Fitted For Line) and 'Fish Fryer' communications trailers in the Royal Signals Troop that I served with back in the 1980s. I believe that they had the same item in the Bedford MJ TEVs and Trifid vehicles (The TEV is the 1980's equivalent of the QLR).

There are a few restored QLRs about, and those seriously interested in researching military communications can make the effort to visit the Royal Signals Museum at Blandford, well worth a visit, and you can include a trip to Bovington, it being in the same area.

Well done Alex and Mark for excellent articles, and well done Ken for keeping the magazine interesting for me.
Best regards
Paul Middleton
MAFVA

Kindly Act

Dear Sir,
I recently sent a recent order to Clydecast Products, and happened to mention if they produced any moulds for making your own figurines.

At 72 years old I am unable to scratch build my own. I received my order this morning and in it were two bare 60 mm figurines to enable me to build moulds from. They did not charge anything for the extra service, so if it is possible, I would like to thank them publicly through ***Military Modelling*** magazine for their kindness and generosity. Could this be done? My name is David McConnell and I come from Newtownards, Co. Down, Northern Ireland.
David Mc Connell

Airfix

Dear Ken
Thanks for printing my email about the Airfix kits. The news about Humbrol/Airfix going into administration did not really surprise me.

The company seems to have lagged behind its rivals for years now as if not knowing which way to take itself. Very few new kit releases then trying for the kids' toy market then deciding to release the older kits again.

They made some great military vehicle kits and fantastic Multipose figures, but in 1:32nd scale when all the rivals were 1:35 scale and 1:76 scale instead of the more popular 1:72 scale (although as you know some box tops claim they are 1:72 scale).

They seem to suffer the 'British way' of we know what's best and a slight look down the nose at the foreign opposition. (The British motorcycle industry in the 1970s that decided not to follow the rest of the world and make smaller bikes or mopeds is another example!)

I think if Airfix had scaled down/up their kits to make them compatible with other companies they might not have got into such trouble and maybe even have become one of the leaders in the field once again.

I wonder if you or any of your readers agree with me that a lot of Airfix's troubles were the scales they used. I'm sure Humbrol will say it's much more complex than wrong scales, but I don't think it has helped.

Thanks again. Great latest issue (the cover picture was brilliant) and not just because my email was in it.
John Upton
Hornby, who are based in Kent, have acquired the Airfix and Humbrol companies and displayed at the UK IPMS Nationals in November. On a question of scales, Airfix was a child of its time. They adopted and produced their plastic kits in the 1960s onwards in the then 'standard' scales of 1:76 for their vehicles and figures (also listed as HO/OO and 20mm) and initially 1:72 scale for their aircraft. (Later 1:72 scale was adopted by Japanese manufacturers to produce plastic kits of vehicles.) Airfix later produced larger vehicle kits and the Multipose and Collectors' figures to the then international 1:32 scale - sometimes listed as 54mm. Tamiya introduced 1:35 scale to the world, while also producing plastic models in 1:21, 1:25 and 1:48 scales amongst others, in the 1960s and 70s. In Shunsaku Tamiya's book he says they arrived at 1:35 scale by first building the master model of their Panther - and then worked it out that they had built it to 1/35th the size of the original! Were they aiming to produce it in 1:32 scale and got it wrong? It's a tempting thought. Or was he just being fanciful? Now the rest is history, and things have moved on quite a bit since then. Ed.

Diamond 'T'

Dear Ed,
Many thanks for including the enlarged photograph of the convoy of Transporters Diamond 'T' (taken from my original) in 'Despatch' in Issue 12. This is most appreciated.

The company I was with was 335 Tank Transporter RASC, which was operational in the Desert with the 8th Army during the North African campaign. In 1945 I was lucky to have been instructed by these veterans who were experts. Nothing was too much trouble to these men.

On Diamond 'T' vehicles there was no such thing as power steering or synchromesh gearboxes. Gear changing was all double-de-clutch. And the old saying 'size is important' is not true as I am 5-foot 5-inches in height.

Thanks again and best wishes
A.D. Dunham

V2 Rocket

Dear Mr Jones,
I read with great interest my son Nigel's article in Issue 13 about the V2 Rocket attack on Hoffmann's factory on 19th December 1944.

After 62 years I found it difficult to read it without a lot of emotion recollecting that night of horrors.

I was 12 years old at the time and I remember my Father who was a very calm and cool man, and I think a brave man, coming home in the early hours of the morning after that night as a visibly shaken man, who sat down and cried like a child. Such was the horror he had just witnessed. I'd never seen him cry before and never saw him cry again.

Thank you so much for publishing this family involvement, with kind regards.
Ron Norfolk
Other readers whose families experienced the V1 and V2 assault on England have expressed similar sentiments about Nigel Norfolk's article in issue 13. Ed.

Turncoat Panther

Dear Ken,
I am a 'newcomer' to your magazine, sort of reborn, and I read Jay Laverty's article in Issue 13 with great interest. I saw the picture of the Panther on the cover on the shelf in Smiths and this led me to pick it up and buy it. I didn't know that the Russians put captured Panthers back into service. The photos of the originals in the article revealed that they did. Oh well, you never stop learning.

In complete contrast, but a bonus to me, in that same issue was Alex Hill's article on the Accurate Armour Austin 'Tilly'. Especially so because I will be building one in RAF markings. Small military vehicles are my main interest, (I also like German World War Two stuff) and his comments on the front axle shock absorbers and how to configure them will solve the problem I had of the wheel springs being too compressed and the wheels getting 'hidden' in the front wings. I was going to pack this out, but the correct fix in the article shows how it should be done.

Two good reasons to buy your magazine. Thanks and keep up the good work.
Tom Harrington

ON PARADE

Books and videos reviewed

● Books and videos for review should be sent to:
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THANKS, An Intimate History of Andrea Miniatures, Carlos Andrea. Andrea Press, Andrea Miniatures, S.L., Los Talleras, 21-Pol. Ind., de Alpedrete 28430 Alpedrete, Madrid, Spain. ISBN 84-96527-95-6. Price in UK £19.95

Carlos Andrea could never be accused as not being passionate about his hobby - he is both an accomplished modeller while running a successful and established business - Andrea Miniatures.

THANKS is Carlos's personal history of his early life and how he began Andrea Miniaturas, now after 20-odd years Spain's premier manufacturer of model figures, famous the world over. I feel an affinity to his account having left the armed forces in the 1970s before going into book publishing and thereafter editing *Military Modelling* magazine since 1979, I've observed the beginnings and the gradual growth of *Andrea Miniaturas* virtually from its birth to the successful concern it is today.

The story makes good reading and Carlos Andrea's passion from turning his interest into his occupation comes through loud and clear. He realized from the early days that his home country did not have the market for the miniatures produced by his brother San and himself, and they looked to the rest of Europe. Things have changed since then and these are ably charted in his narrative.

On a personal note some events I knew about at the time they happened, and I still remember, have been by jogged by the book and I can now interpret those I'd, perhaps, had misgivings about have been made clearer with from first hand accounts therein. I'm sure many other modellers who are aware of Andrea Miniatures will feel the same too.

The book is illustrated with a very interesting set of photos - from the small fuzzy snaps of over 20 years ago of people and places, coming bang up to date and backed with a good selection of pictures of miniature figures and personalities. If, like me, you like a good read and are interested in the history of and other people's outlook on your chosen part of the hobby, and this is an honest and frank account, then I recommend it to you.

THANKS is available, plus £1.95 postage, from Historex Agents, Wellington House, 157 Snargate Street, Dover, Kent CT17 9BZ. Tel: 01304 206720. Fax: 01304 204528. sales@historex-agents.co.uk

Ken Jones

Armour Modelling, John Prigent. Osprey Publishing, Midland House, West Way, Botley, Oxford OX2 0PH. ISBN 1-84176-974-6. Price £19.99

Cards on the table! I must first confess to writing the Foreword to this new Osprey Masterclass by John Prigent. I do stand behind my line the publishers quote from it as ...'The ideal primer for anyone new to the hobby of modelling miniature military vehicles.' This new book is a first for an Osprey military modelling title in that it has a hard cover and it is wire bound, so it opens out flat. Ideal for modellers who like their documentation close to hand on the working surface.

With the introduction out of the way the book goes straight into describing appropriate tools, materials and paint. This is followed by a chapter on building Dragon's 1:35 scale first production model of the German Tiger I - a popular choice. This is one for anyone just beginning to assemble plastic kits of military vehicles. A lot of kits bought remain unbuilt and perhaps this will inspire some to blow off the dust and open the box with a view to assembling what's inside.

'More painting and finishing ideas and simple improvements' is the following chapter and passes on hints on brush painting and how to achieve a 'sprayed' finish without using an airbrush. This section has lots of little (and larger) tips on making things look better on a model built from a kit and includes painting and converting figures.

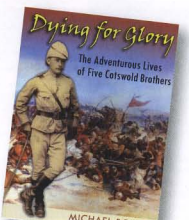
Chapters on making scenic bases, working with photo-etched metal, kits with resin and white metal parts feature before a chapter on a simple 'scratch built conversion' relates how to backdate Tamiya's 1:35 scale M3A2 into an M2. This is a conversion using commercial parts, and the 'scratch built' in the description refers to what you actually have to make from scratch. Scale drawings are provided and the step by step approach of photos and text show 'how to'.

From chapter 8 onwards some guest modellers (who will need no introduction to anyone who keeps abreast of 'who's who' in the hobby) make some valuable contributions - There's a Hotchkiss *Geschützwagen* conversion by Steve Zaloga, which includes a very useful piece on modelling a British para and a scenic base; *Sturmgeschütz IV* by Gary Edmundson showing many more techniques and also includes a display base and accompanying figures. Finally, Nick Cortese shows how to use Blast Models' parts to convert Tamiya's T-55A into an IDF Tiran 5 Main Battle Tank.

It's all rounded off with a list of references and research leads, followed by source material and something often forgotten in niche modelling titles - a useful index.

There aren't many 'backs to basics' books on modelling military vehicles and this new Osprey is recommended to anyone just starting out. Although the accent is placed on 'how to' for beginners, there's enough within to interest most skill levels.

Ken Jones



Dying for Glory, The Adventurous Lives of Five Cotswold Brothers, Michael Boyes. Phillimore & Co. Ltd., Shopwyke Manor Barn, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 2BG. bookshop@phillimore.co.uk ISBN 1-86077-394-X. Price £20

Dying for Glory is the story of a Victorian family - the Le Marchant's who can trace their ancestry back to Peter Le Marchant, Lieutenant Governor and Bailiff of Guernsey in the reign of Edward III (1327 -77).

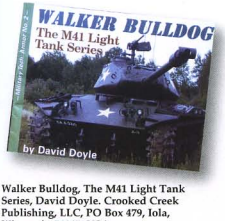
Major General John Gaspard Le Marchant was the first Lieutenant Governor of the Royal Military College and he died at the head of the cavalry at Salamanca in 1812. A grateful nation acknowledged his services and awarded £1,500 for a monument to his name and a £1,200 annual pension to his nine children - one of whom, Captain Carey Le Marchant stormed San Sebastian, but died in 1814 of a wound he got at the battle of Nive.

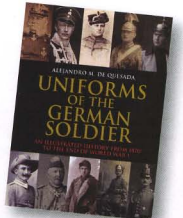
It is the sons of the Reverend Robert and Eliza Le Marchant that concern us; there were six brothers and all but one (Gaspard) looked towards the military life; four became soldiers and one a sailor.

The brothers' stories are interesting and make exciting reading, which I found inspired me and produced sentiment for earlier times. Of the brothers, Evelyn went into the Royal Navy, whereas Edward, Basil, Cecil and Louis were commissioned into the army. Only Edward and Louis did not live to a ripe old age; Edward as Commanding Officer of 1st Battalion The Hampshire Regiment was shot in the back and killed by a Muslim *ghazi* in Peswar in 1899. Louis, while commanding 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment was killed on the banks of the *Marne* in 1914. Part of a poignant entry in the diary of Lt. The Hon. Lionel Tennyson of the Rifle Brigade quoted: "...but coming back through a small wood, I came right upon 16 dead Englishmen including the Colonel of the East Lancs, Le Marchant by name, all lying side by side ready to be buried."

There are lots of illustrations in the book - family and archive photos of the Le Marchant's time. Many will not have been seen before, adding much to what is presented. The text is relieved by the pictures, some of which were drawn by the brothers on site or for letters home. I like a good story and I enjoy a good book and I thoroughly enjoyed this one. Modellers should find plenty of ideas within for vignettes or dioramas and I highly recommend it.

Ken Jones





Walker Bulldog, The M41 Light Tank Series, David Doyle. Crooked Creek Publishing, LLC, PO Box 479, Iola, Wisconsin 54945. USA. CrookedCreekPublishing@gmail.com
ISBN 0-9786084-1-0. Price $17.95

Walker Bulldog is the second book released in the Military Tech Series produced exclusively for Stevens International, PO Box 126, 706 N. White Horse Pike, Magnolia, New Jersey 08049, USA. www.sevenshobby.com The first was the M5 and M5A1 Stuart Light Tanks.

Although the M24 Chaffee replaced the Stuart, it lacked the firepower envisaged for the post war battlefield concept and a move towards fitting a 76mm gun into a 'light tank' eventually caused it to be 'redescribed' as the '76mm Gun Tank'. The book's landscape format is packed with good clear and detailed photos of the M41 - in black and white and there are some early colour shots of the first to be sent to Germany to counter a perceived Soviet threat, rather than Korea where the US was actively engaged in a War against 'communism'.

Detailed walk-around sequences, exterior and interior, on a preserved M41 are presented and the book is rounded off with a very good supply of US Official Ordnance Department drawings. These drawings have not been reproduced to any recognized scale because each one has a dimension scale and it is this that should be used to check or provide measurements. As a monograph on a particular type, it is hard to beat. It sticks to the point, it's big on picture content, relying on detailed captions rather than text, and provides the kind of comprehensive coverage required by modellers. A highly recommended reference book for the M41.
Ken Jones

Uniforms of the German Soldier, An Illustrated History From 1870 To The End of World War I, Alejandro M. De Quesada. Greenhill Books, Park House, 1 Russell Gardens, London NW11 9NN. ISBN-10 1-85367-708-6 or ISBN-13 978-1-85367-708-3. Price £25

Illustrated dust jackets on books are meant to herald their content - difficult when it's all text - but in the case of illustrated works, the jacket of this new Greenhill book really provides an appetizer as to the quality within. You will not be disappointed - it's crammed with over 300 black and white and over 30 colour photos. After an introduction covering 'The Kaiser's Army 1870-1919', the first section covers 'colour illustrations'. In practically all cases this should read 'coloured illustrations', the majority being tinted monotone pictures, there being no really viable colour photographic film system at that time.

The photographs are divided into three sections - German Empire 1871-1914, Imperial German Colonial and Overseas Troops and World War I (1914-1918). The black and white photographic content is superb, there is very little retouched and most have reproduced on the page as pin sharp as the day the first bulky cameras exposed them onto treated glass plates. 'Action' shots of these times were rare, as were large group shots due to slow shutter speeds recording blurred images because of movement. However, there are some of both included and these, although posed, are naturally of lesser quality than the superb collection of posed studio photos herein. Anyone interested in period military photographs will find plenty to drool over here.

Appendices cover uniforms and appointments in the same categories as the photo sections and are taken from respected German publications Although the originals seem to have been coloured it is a pity they are reproduced as mono here. They would have been far better in their original colours, when shoulder straps and other appointments identified the regiments by colours. It may have added to the cover price, but it would have been worth it because it's disappointing to see it not as colour illustrations. In fact what could have been the heart of the book has been wasted.

Appendix D covers the 'Prussianization of the Americas' - a brief overview of how German military fashion affected other armies - mainly South American countries - but there is an American in there - a Californian Militiaman from San Francisco c.1880 in US Model 1872 Uniform with German 'influence'.

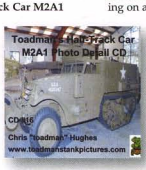
It is an excellent and well-printed book on good quality paper and recommended to military photo buffs everywhere, and modellers too will find it brimming with ideas for miniature figures.
Ken Jones

Toadman's CD 16 Half-Track Car M2A1 Photo Detail CD
www.toadmanstankpictures.com

With the release of the Dragon M2A1 Halftrack modellers will be looking for reference material, which makes this new disc from Toadman well timed. Put simply, it is a CD-ROM containing around 230 walk-around and detail photos taken at the Military Vehicle Technology Foundation at Portola Valley, California. This simple description does not do it justice, however. When the disc is loaded it starts up in a simple menu with a table of contents. Note that I am a PC user, for Mac users there is a simple procedure to start and instructions are included. Logically first is an introduction giving background details such as production figures and dates and an outline of the changes from M2 to M2A1. Photo coverage is divided into three main areas, exterior, interior and suspension. Individual photos get a 'page' of their own with links to go to next and previous images or another section. Each photo has a caption stating what is seen which also includes useful information. For example, the first image is a head-on view, which is obvious enough; less obvious is armour thickness, which is given. Progress around the vehicle continues, starting with general overall views before moving in close. 'Detail views' is what this series is really about. Most items are shown from several angles, for the headlights we see them from front, side, back, above and even underneath showing the wiring. Not only is the original style shown, but also the later demountable type is depicted from a different halftrack. Given that these are standard items this poses no problems and only serves to show the attention to detail. The same applies to another common difference between halftrack vehicles; while the one mainly featured carries a roller there are 10 photos from an M16 showing the alternative winch arrangement in detail. Bonnet are appears closed with close-ups of the clasps, which hold it shut and open to see the engine. This includes details of what the various components are and even pointers to correct colours of them. Similar details follow as the tour continues outside as well as in. Gas can and mounting, machine guns - M2 fifty cal, M1917A1 and M1919A4 series thirty cals, which get their own detailed views, with shots from an M3A1 Scout Car to show the skate rail mounting typical of M2 Cars - doors inside and out, hinges, inside the characteristic stowage bins of the M2 and M2A1 Cars, under the fuel filler caps, radio, seats, controls, instruction plates, mines in the mine racks and separately laid out for better detail and even the dates when racks were ordered to be added. As an added extra the racks are shown both folded up and extended for use.

What made the halftrack series was the suspension system and this naturally gets its own section. Front wheels, axles, protective guards, springs, steering arms, prop shafts, track unit wheels, springs, tracks. You get the picture?

Relatively few people have the chance to examine a vehicle such as this in the flesh. There are examples in museums and collections open to the public while some appear at vehicle shows, but looking under the bonnet is unlikely to be allowed as would be climbing on and inside and you would get funny looks not to say dusty and dirty if you crawled underneath. I know, it has happened to me before now, and more than once, the looks and the dirty clothes. And why bother? All the effort of travelling, climbing and photographing has been done for you and the result is well presented here. The only drawback is that you need a home computer to make use of it but many people have these.



As with earlier discs in this series, this one is great value at a retail price of US$7.99 plus US$2.15 for shipping anywhere in the world. It and all available discs can be ordered online direct from www.toadmanstankpictures.com with payment via the widely used PayPal system. Chris Hughes gives a fast and efficient service and all his discs are strongly recommended. Watch his site for special offers and also photos of various vehicles not available on disc. *(The 'squashed' photo on the CD sleeve is inentional!)*
Peter Brown

'Tarawa Tank'

Steve Zaloga builds Dragon's new 1:35 scale M4A2 Sherman of the United States Marine Corps

Dragon's new Tarawa M4A2 is departure from their previous Shermans, which tended to be reworks of older kits with new bits thrown in. The entire hull, turret, and tracks are brand new while the suspension is an improved version of an already substantially upgraded set. This kit is certainly Dragon's best Sherman to date. The first release comes in the markings of the US Marine I Corps Tank Battalion on Tarawa, but a British Sherman Mark III has been announced as well and will be available by the time you're reading this.

Some Historical Notes

The US Marine Corps's initial tank battalions were equipped with M3 light tanks, but in 1942 plans were laid to add two medium tank battalions at corps level while the light tank battalions served for divisional support. The Marines were far down on the priority list for new equipment, after the US Army and Lend-Lease for Britain and the Soviet Union. They finally received the diesel-powered M4A2 in part because it was the only type available to them in the foreseeable future and in part due to the desire to adopt diesel tanks for commonality of fuel with Navy landing craft.

When forces were selected for the assault on the Tarawa atoll in November 1943, Company C of the I Marine Amphibious Corps (IMAC) Medium Tank Battalion was assigned to provide tank support for the initial landing. The tanks were not provided with any form of deep-wading trunks, which had not yet been developed in the Pacific theatre. This would later prove to be the Achilles heel of the tank landing and far more tanks drowned in shell craters and deep water than were knocked out in combat. They were delivered to Tarawa aboard the LSD-1 USS Ashland, and landed using LCM-3.

The 1st Platoon plus two headquarters tanks landed at Beach Red 1 in the 5th assault wave, losing one tank on the approach in when it 'drowned' in a shell hole. The five remaining tanks reached the beach, but could not proceed due to the large number of dead and wounded Marines so they attempted to skirt around the congested landing site. In the process, three more tanks drowned out, and only two tanks finally reached dry land between beaches Red 1 and Green around 11:30 hours; CECELIA, the command tank of Lieutenant Ed Bale, and CHINA GAL. Almost immediately, they were confronted by a Type 95 Ha-go light tank of the 7th

TOP: The finished model photographed against a scenic background. BELOW: Three of the Company 'C' M4A2 tanks led by COLORADO photographed on Tarawa a few weeks after the fighting. (NARA)

CONDOR was knocked out during the fighting on Tarawa, but the cause remains a mystery. The official accounts suggest it was accidentally knocked out by a US Navy dive-bomber, but battalion veterans doubt that account. (NARA)

Sasebo Special Naval Landing Force (the Japanese marines). CECELIA fired first and missed, and the Type 95 got a lucky hit with its 37mm gun, which actually struck inside the Cecilia's 75mm gun tube, making it unusable. CHINA GAL destroyed the Type 95, ending one of the few tank duels in the battle. For modellers interested in more details of the Marine tanks on Tarawa, I would strongly recommend Ed Gilbert's book *Marine Tank Battles in the Pacific* (Combined Publishing 2001) which offers a very detailed account of the Tarawa fighting.

Dragon's Model

The suspension of the Dragon M4A2 kit will come as no surprise to anyone who has built any of the recent Dragon Sherman kits. I was pleasantly surprised to notice two significant changes on the bogie sprues. The track skid has been considerably thinned compared to earlier releases and Dragon finally provides a rear insert for the stamped idler wheel, long-standing complaints against the earlier kits. Overall, this suspension is my favourite for Sherman modelling - even over the more elaborate Tasca Set A, as it is very well detailed and much easier to assemble. Dragon has put the wheel mould part line at the edge of the road wheel instead of in the usual centre location, which largely eliminates the tedious work of cleaning up the dozen road-wheels.

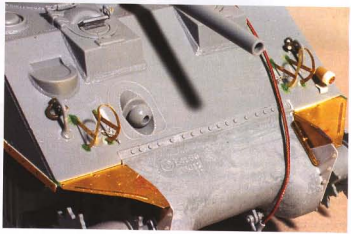
The small rivets along the rim of the stamped road wheels were applied using 'dimensional' acrylic paint available from craft stores for painting T-shirts.

'Dimensional' Paint

A few modest improvements can be made, however. The Sherman stamped wheels as depicted in the kit had a small series of pop rivets along the rim of the wheels, two between each spoke. While they are not particularly noticeable, diehard Sherman fans may want to add them. I tried a new technique on this model using 'dimensional' paint. Art and craft stores in the US sell acrylic paint intended for painting shirts, and in the 'Tulip' brand is a 'dimensional' paint call 'Tulip Slick'. This is basically paint mixed in a thick acrylic gel, which gives it the consistency of toothpaste. It does not dry flat like usual paint, but retains its shape.

I applied the rivets using a fine point in a pin vice. This takes a bit of practice to get a consistent size, but since the paint is acrylic,

The fate of many of the Marine tanks on Tarawa was to become 'drowned' in shell holes approaching the beach after their engines or electric systems failed since they did not have deep wading trunks or sealing. (NARA)



ABOVE LEFT: Some small changes were made to the rear deck, including the straps on the tools and gas-cap chains added from the Part photo-etch set. ABOVE RIGHT: The fenders and brush guards come with the kit as photo-etched metal parts. The brush-guards were attached using Kneadtite for greater durability. The tow cable is from Karaya.

any mistakes can be easily washed off and redone. It is less time-consuming than other methods of rivet making and I think it works reasonably well for applications such as this, but I am not sure it is the ideal solution for other applications such as a row of rivets on a flat plate where the slight inconsistencies between each rivet would be more evident. The other improvement I made to the suspension bogies was to drill four holes in the rectangular front face of the bogie, which is basically the alternate attachment for the rear trailing return roller bracket.

Another new feature of the kit is the use of Dragon soft styrene track instead of the usual individual link tracks. I am not fond of conventional vinyl tank track, but the Dragon concoction can actually be glued using styrene cement. I would be a bit careful with this, because aggressive types of cement could damage the material. I used the Tamiya 'orange' bottle cement, which is a cross between the usual liquid cements and the tube gel cements. The tracks glued easily and stayed glued. The detail on these is quite good, and the end connectors are better detailed than on the Dragon hard plastic tracks. To get the tracks taut, I would recommend placing the rear idler at its aftmost position.

This kit correctly depicts the Sherman track tensioning system, but I found that the track is a bit loose if the idler wheel axle is placed in one of the inner positions. This means that the axle should be at the 9 o'clock position when looking at it (part A66) on the right side and at the 3 o'clock position when facing it on the left side.

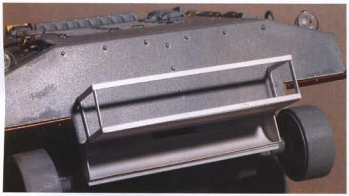
The rest of the hull assembly is straightforward and I simply built the model straight out of the box.

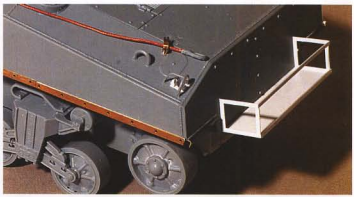
New Upper Hull

The upper hull is new and very nicely detailed. About the only change I made was to add some detail inside the fire-extinguisher cover behind the left rear corner of the turret. The tools could use some attachment fittings and straps, and I used some that I had left over from the Part M4A1 photo-etch set. The pry bar had a different attachment fitting than the usual Sherman style, and I made this from some spare PE brass sheet.

The Marine M4A2 had a few features not provided in the kit. They were usually fitted with the exhaust deflector in the rear over the

Tex Rudloff, a veteran of Tarawa, stands in the driver's hatch of COLORADO after the fighting.





The only major additions to the model were a jerrycan rack typical of the IMAC Tank Battalion on Tarawa, and the often-ignored sheet metal exhaust deflector.

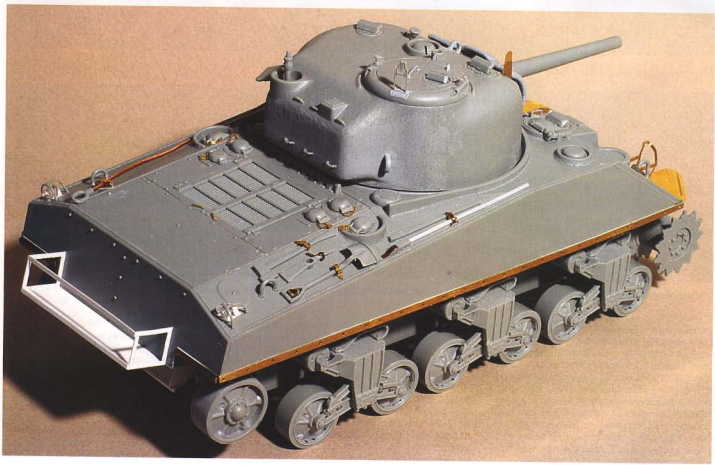
muffler. Some kits such as the Academy M10 come with this deflector, but it is not particularly accurate in shape so I made one from sheet plastic. I bent some .005 thou plastic sheet around an aluminium hobby-knife handle, submerged it in boiling water with some cross-action tweezers or pliers for about a minute, then quickly tempered it by moving it from the boiling water to the cold water tap in the kitchen. This requires some care to avoid scalding, and I usually use winter gloves for insulation during the process.

The Marine M4A2 also had a simple rack for jerrycans on the rear. I made this out of sheet plastic as shown here. I suspect that this was used for USMC water jerrycans, but all I had were the usual US Army gasoline jerrycans, which had a different lid and different stampings on the side. There may be some resin Marine water jerrycans, but I made do with the garden-variety plastic Tamiya army jerrycans even if not entirely accurate.

The M4A2s on Tarawa did not have the headlights fitted, so I produced the plug used to fill the attachment point using a Grandt Line railroad bolt, and fitted a chain from the plug to the tubular stowage bracket adjacent to the brush guard, made from a slice of aluminium screening. The kit moulds the tubular storage bracket directly to the hull, but I cut this off and replaced it with some very thin tubing made by heat stretching a piece of Evergreen _ inch plastic tube in the same fashion as stretching sprue.

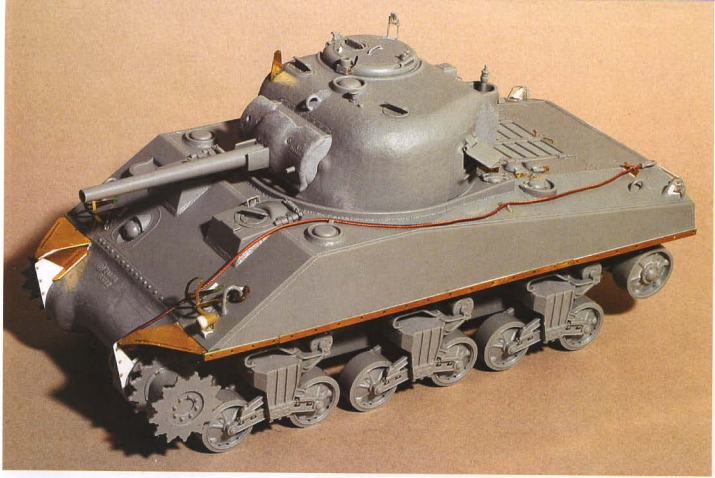
The kit comes with photo etched metal brush-guards for the front lights, and plastic ones for the rear. Attaching PE brush-guards is a major nuisance since the manufacturers seldom provide any tabs to act as gluing surfaces. My solution is to use a small blob of Duro Kneadtite epoxy putty. Kneadtite is fundamentally different from other epoxy putties in that it is extremely tacky, like bubble gum, before drying and slightly elastic after drying. I cut a small sliver off the yellow/blue strip and then dampened my fingers in rubbing alcohol to prevent the putty from binding, and then mix it up into the final green colour. Using a round toothpick dampened in rubbing alcohol, I thin put some small bits of putty on the four points where the brush-guard will rest. After I stick the brush-guard into the putty, I then sculpt the putty to the sides of the brush-guard, mimicking the actual weld-bead.

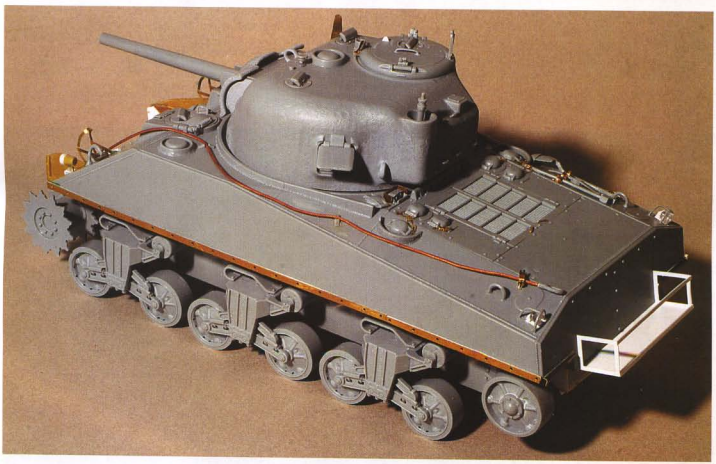
The finished model before painting.



This method is far more durable than either cyanoacrylate (CA) or epoxy glue, and I find that Kneadtite is much easier to use for these troublesome PE parts since it allows for repositioning. I also find that Kneadtite is much more durable when dry. For example, I accidentally whacked a brush guard on another Sherman. Had I used CA glue or epoxy, the PE brush-guard would have been knocked flying across the room. The PE part attached with Kneadtite remained in place, though slightly bent.

I also used a slightly different technique for attaching the PE sand-shield strips along the lower sides of the hull. Instead of trying to attach them directly to the hull using CA or epoxy glue, I attached a thin strip of .005 plastic to the back using CA





glue. This is fairly easy to do, and the CA glue sticks very well to a flat surface such as this. Once dry, I then attached the strips to the hull using plastic cement. This technique makes it easier to reposition and align the strips, which is very difficult to do when using CA or epoxy. I use the same technique with small tool fittings such as the PE part for the towing cable latch on the rear upper hull.

The kit also comes with PE front fenders, which I don't think is a particularly good idea. I suspect that many modellers will find these to be difficult to bed properly to shape. Furthermore, even when properly bent, there is apt to be a gap between the vertical portion and the curved upper portion. I solved this by soldering the gap. My preferred soldering method is to use a Wahl rechargeable soldering iron, which are available in the United States from

The finished model after painting.

shops like Micro-Mark. They are much smaller and handier than normal soldering irons, and since they work off a rechargeable battery with a simple button control, they are safer to use and don't heat up as much as conventional soldering irons. I am not certain whether there is a European equivalent to this product, but it certainly makes soldering PE parts much easier.

I made a few other small changes on the hull such as adding some towing hooks to the front lift hooks as seen in photos of M4s on Tarawa. I added my own siren on the hull front, only to discover later that the kit does contain a siren on the clear plastic sprue, and therefore invisible to me on first glance!

The turret in the Dragon kit is all new and has some very good features, including the first depiction of both the early and late gun shields for the M34A1 gun mounting. Assembly of the turret was very straightforward and I used the Kneadtite to attach the PE blade sight.

ABOVE LEFT: The Dragon Gen 2 figures are quite complicated, but result in very nice figures. The back had to be flattened to permit the flamethrower tank to sit properly. ABOVE RIGHT: A close-up of the Gen 2 flamethrower figure, painted using Vallejo acrylics.

The finished model on the Monroe Perdu 'Sunken Road' diorama base.

Painting and Weathering

The tanks on Tarawa were relatively clean, but were likely to have been covered with dust and sand after a little action. I began by painting the model in my usual mixture of 'scale' Olive Drab mixed roughly 60:40 from Tamiya Olive Drab XF62 and Dark Yellow XF60 (panzer yellow). After setting my compressor on low pressure (around 15 psi), I added some streaking effects using full strength Tamiya Olive Drab and Dark Yellow to break up the monotone finish. I applied some clear gloss on the hull side where the decals would be placed to eliminate the problem of silvering on the clear bits.

I wanted to do CHINA GAL and surprisingly, it was one of the few tanks not depicted on the decal sheet. So I did the lettering using Woodland Scenic dry transfers. The kit decal sheet shows the battalion's elephant insignia in grey, but I have seen colour film footage of the Tarawa tanks which shows it to be yellow like the names. So I repainted the grey bits before applying the decal to the model.

I have not seen any evidence of the registration numbers of the various tanks other than CONDOR, so I used one of the kit's Blue Drab sets at random. Once the decals were in place and dry, I over sprayed them with some clear gloss to prevent any damage from the subsequent wash. I did the detail painting of the tools and tyres before applying the wash. Instead of the usual dark wash and light dry brushing, I reversed the approach to create a dustier finish. I airbrushed the tracks in Tamiya IJN Grey XF75 along with some random over-brushing with some brown and grey for more colour depth.

For the wash, I mixed some Humbrol Light Earth 119 along with some Winsor & Newton Titanium White to result in a light sand colour. For the wash, I mixed in some mineral (white) spirits, as well as some Winsor & Newton Liquin, which is an oil paint additive intended to accelerate the drying time of oil paint. I find that it also works well as a medium to help spread out the wash a bit, compared to solvent alone. I added a blob of Liquin, about the same amount as the paint. After the wash had dried, I did some dry-brushing and accent painting using Humbrol Olive Drab 155, varying the mix with black and sepia oil paint. This helps break up the finish and pop out details. It's also a good way to simulate the effect of crew activity wearing through the dust and grime to reveal the darker undercoat.

Once the finish was dry I airbrushed on some Testors Dullcote to flatten the finish and with that dry, I did the final 'glossy' finishing touches like some highlighting with powdered graphite to simulate wear. I also painted on the rear lights and added the periscope surface lenses using small rectangles cut from 35mm film leader attaching them with white glue.

The Optional Figure

The kneeling Marine figure with the flamethrower is from the excellent Dragon Gen 2 Tarawa set. The Gen 2 figures are really little kits in their own right, with about 20 parts for this figure alone. I was in a bit of a rush so I substituted a Hornet head for the kit head as the new Gen 2 heads are two-piece, requiring some delicate cleaning along the seam line. I painted the figure using Vallejo acrylics.

The base for the model comes from the excellent Monroe Perdu line of resin bases, this one being their 'Sunken Road' base which fits smaller 1:35 scale AFVS quite well. It comes with a nice little wall, but I filled in the depression for that using epoxy putty.

Conclusions

Overall, the new Dragon M4A2 is a superb kit, and one of the few Shermans I have been able to build almost straight out-of-the-box without a lot of corrections. It has a lot of potential for depicting Marine Shermans in the later 1944-45 campaigns. At the time of writing Dragon had advertised a British Sherman III based on this kit, and this greatly expands the potential colour and markings options. Then there are Red Army Shermans, Free French M4A2, etc. ■

Roman Officer

Hardy Tempest makes a few adjustments before painting the Young Miniatures' 90mm kit designed by Young B. Song

Young Miniatures have not been on the figure scene for long, but in that little time they have made a big impact. The driving force behind them is a very talented Korean sculptor called Young B. Song who does the majority of the sculpting, and from his capable hands comes this gorgeous kit. The 90mm figure is a limited run of 300 castings, so get yours quick, as they are very popular and becoming rarer by the minute. Anatomically the figure is perfect, he is depicted with one arm holding his billowing cloak, and a helmet in the other. It is a proud stance, but at ease following a battle.

Cast in 14 white metal pieces, the kit has minimal flash and reveals some superb detail. With some kits (mine included) there were issues with the cloak to arm join, which has now been rectified by the company and if you discover you have one of these kits Young Miniatures will replace it. Being an experienced modeller I had little problem re-sculpting the area and elected to do this rather than wait for a replacement.

Message From The Manufacturer

Following is a message that Young B. Song posted on the Internet to all his customers. I'm sure you will agree that Young Miniatures has been very gracious approaching this problem.

Hello all our customers. This is Young Miniatures in Korea. Last January, we released 90mm figure 'Roman Officer 1st AD (YH9002)'. But a few days ago, one customer asked to us about a fault with it. So we investigated this matter, and we did find it had a fault with the cape and right arm part. It was problem in the process of casting.

We are very sorry to all customers, as we did not ensure thorough quality control. So we will repair and reproduce some of the faulty pieces (cape and right arm) of YH9002. If you have this figure, please check it.

And if your figure has the same fault, please let us know by e-mail info@young-miniatures.com or fax (+82-54-751-4402). Then we will send a free new piece as soon as possible. We will need:
1.Limited Edition number.
2. Name.
3.Home address.
4.Phone No.

We will also send new pieces to all our dealers. So new customers will be able to buy the repaired pieces. We are again sincerely sorry to all our customers and we will continue to always try for products of the highest quality.*
Sincerely yours,
Young Miniatures.

*(*Historex Agents of Dover tell us that they have sent out replacement parts to their customers who purchased a Roman Officer kit with the faulty part. Ed.)*

Sub Assemblies Are a Must

Building up this figure calls for sub-assemblies, which are a must as it's impossible to paint any of the detail on his back once the parts are glued together. Also, I strongly advise many dry runs to understand the 'build' before assembly, as the kit needs to be fitted together correctly for everything to align properly. This is a heavy figure and I would recommend pinning each piece and gluing with 5-minute epoxy to ensure a permanent fixing.

One of the most enjoyable parts of the painting process for me is the planning stages. I like to envisage the final look of the figure. For the Roman I wanted an 'on campaign' look, showing the privations of many days exposed to the elements and enemy action. However, in this article I will only go into details on weathering, as my other techniques should be quite well known to you now.

I began by priming the figure with thinned coats of Humbrol Matt White 34 enamel, then undercoating with acrylics.

Flesh Mix

Undercoat: (Acrylic) Yellow Ochre + Yellow.
Basecoat: (Oils) Equal amounts of Venetian Red + Cadmium Yellow + Ochre.
First Highlight: (Oils) Basecoat + Naples Yellow + Titanium White.
First Shadow: (Oils) Venetian Red.
Second Highlight: (Oils) First highlight + Titanium White.
Final Highlight: (Oils) Titanium White.
Second Shadow: (Oils) Venetian Red + Lamp Black.
Deepest Shadow: (Oils) Lamp Black.

Staying with the battle worn appearance, I wanted to impart a very dirty look to the skin, especially on the hands. This was achieved by washes and dots of Sepia, Burnt Umber and Ochre; the darkest washes on the lower edges and the lighter washes to the top. Try to avoid too much weathering on the highlights, as these tend to make the painting look sloppy and can ruin a figure.

The cuts visible on the legs and arms are painted lines of Venetian Red with a touch of Lamp Black in the deepest part, and then underlined with the second highlight flesh colour. Here and there I smudged on a blood mix of Venetian Red with a little Lamp black added, but very sparingly as it's very easy to overdo the blood.

To add to the campaign look I gave him quite a heavy beard growth. This was achieved by stippling on a mix of Lamp Black + Venetian Red. I also elected to re-sculpt the hair to give it a more tousled look. Although the hair on the head casting is fine and very well done, it's just a little too coiffured for my taste.

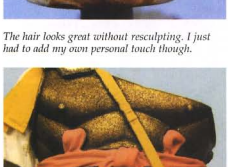
Bronze Armour

Undercoat: (Acrylic) Gold.
Basecoat: (Oils) Sepia.
First Highlight: (Oils) Gold Printer's Ink + Sap Green.
First Shadow: (Oils) Sepia.
Final Highlight: (Oils) Gold.
Second Shadow: (Oils) Lamp Black.

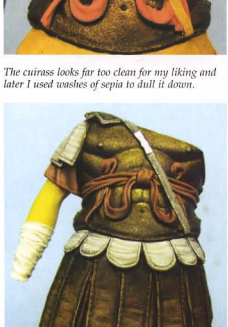
I'd originally planned on a leather cuirass for him, as I love to paint leather. After researching on line I discovered that a leather cuirass would be highly unlikely, as the leather would have to have been very thick, rendering the armour very cumbersome. Another idea I had was to paint the cuirass as steel, a short lived idea as it is very unlikely that during this period they would have been any other metals other than bronze or iron for body armour. If you really wanted a 'white metal finish', the Romans sometimes coated bronze armour with tin, so you would have some historical fact behind you. Anyway, as you can see I settled on the bronze idea, for a really dirty bronze, aged to look like it has seen some action.

Once again a big thank you to Dr Mike Thomas and Medrom; your knowledge knows no limits.

The hair looks great without resculpting. I just had to add my own personal touch though.



The cuirass looks far too clean for my liking and later I used washes of sepia to dull it down.



Far too clean for my liking!

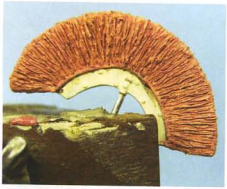
The cloak completed and early stages of weathering begun.

He hasn't taken up surfing! That prevents my hand rubbing against the figure during painting.

The Cloak

Undercoat: (Acrylic) Matt White.
Basecoat: (Oils) Sepia.
First Highlight: (Oils) Titanium White.
First Shadow: (Oils) Sepia.
Second Highlight: (Oils) Lamp Black.
Weathering: (Oils) Yellow Ochre, Burnt Umber and Sepia.

The cloak was, to me, going to be the greatest challenge, as keeping to the dirty theme of the figure could be difficult on a large area such as this. After painting and highlighting with my normal technique I started stippling into the wet oil paint Burnt Umber and Sepia, this was mainly along the lower edges of the cloak. When it was dry I



ABOVE: The plume after resculpting, prior to shading. RIGHT: The plume after shading.

once again used washes and stains of Ochre, Burnt Umber, with dots of 'raw' oil paint in places to look like heavy soiling. On the higher areas of the cloak I employed a more heavily diluted oil mix, which helped to harmonize the weathering with the shading and highlighting. Blood was hinted at in places and grass stains were painted on using washes on the lower edges of the cloak.

Trousers and Tunic

Undercoat: (Acrylic) Pink.
Basecoat: (Oils) Venetian Red + Lamp Black.
First Highlight: (Oils) Venetian Red.
First Shadow: (Oils) Basecoat + Lamp Black.
Second Highlight: (Oils) First Highlight + Yellow ochre.
Final Highlight: (Oils) Second Highlight + Naples Yellow.
Second Shadow: (Oils) Lamp Black.

Red is quite an easy colour to weather, because when liquids soak into it they tend to look dark. When stomping around in dirty conditions mud seems to settle in what I call a 'splash zone' - the area around the lower edges and the front of the garment. For dirtying up the trousers I used washes of Burnt Umber with stains of Sepia, and once again I avoided dirtying the highlights and kept the weathering to the bottom of the trousers.

Leather Pturges

Undercoat: (Acrylic) Ochre.
Basecoat: (Oils) Sepia.
First Shadow: (Oils) Sepia wash.
Second Shadow: (Oils) Lamp Black.

I began by undercoating all the leather areas with acrylic Ochre, and then I base coated them with Sepia. Using a chisel-tipped brush I began removing the wet oil paint, revealing the acrylic undercoat beneath. When dry I accentuated the shadows with sepia and later reinforced them with Lamp Black. On the edges subject to heavy wear and tear I painted dots of ochre to make the leather look distressed and well worn.

I washed the fingernails with burnt umber to make them look dirty. I really enjoyed painting all that dirt. I wouldn't know where to start with a clean figure.

Time for the dirt.

The skin didn't miss out on the weathering process.

Boots

Undercoat: (Acrylic) Ochre.
Basecoat: (Oils) Venetian Red + Lamp Black.
First Highlight: (Oils) Naples Yellow.
Second Highlight: (Oils) Naples yellow.
Shadow: (Oils) Lamp Black.

Groundwork

As always I went for a simplistic look to the groundwork, choosing a dense windswept grass, tousled to show sympathy with the billowing cloak. For this longer type of grass, paintbrush bristles are excellent; especially those tapered ones from the very top. When I had attached them I washed them with a suitable green oil paint, it's always best to do this before the figure is on the base as the paint flicks everywhere and can ruin a good paint job. A few bloodstains here and there and that was it! Another one to add to the collection.

Although a little difficult in places I still would highly recommend this figure, and judging from the many examples I saw at Euro Militaire it's popular with you guys too. My next project will be a 54mm Roman Hastatus from Soldiers and I hope to share it with you.

An imposing piece and definitely someone you would not like to meet on a dark night.

Availability

Young Miniatures kits and Andrea acrylics are available from Historex Agents, Wellington House, 157 Snargate Street, Dover, Kent CT17 9BZ. Tel: 01304 206720. Fax: 01304 204528.
sales@historex-agents.co.uk
www.historexagents.com The Roman Officer costs £47 + £4.99 in the UK.

All Oil paints and thinners used were Daler-Rowney and are available from all good arts suppliers.

For all questions on Medieval and Roman subjects take a look at Medrom www.delphiforums.com I'm sure you will find an answer.

You can see more of my work on my Website www.HardyTempest.moonfruit.com

If you have any queries on my techniques please feel free to e-mail me there. ■

Napoleon's Retreat

Adrian Hopwood models the Stormtroopers' figure of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte in cold weather clothing at the retreat of his La grande armée from Moscow

I was going to do a long historical background to this, but Napoleon's rise and fall is so involved, not to mention well documented, that those who wish to know about it, already do. I haven't (realistically) sufficient space to do justice to even one small part of the Russian campaign, let alone Napoleon's annexation of most of mainland Europe in the first decade and a quarter of the 19th century.

Napoleon's relationship with Czar Alexander was beginning to break down in 1812, partly due to his resurrection of the Duchy of Warsaw, and also his refusal to aid the Czar in driving out the Turks that had gained a foothold in Southern Europe. Britain exploited this weakening friendship between Napoleon and the Czar, making peace with Russia and Sweden. This really was the beginning of the end for Napoleon, the French forces and their allies and lead to their eventual defeat at Waterloo.

Whilst many battles were fought whilst retreating from Russia, the abiding picture is of the remnants of the defeated French Grand Army making their long and arduous trek home; the harsh Russian winter taking a dreadful toll on them as they went. Many sculptors have chosen to depict snapshots of this harrowing period of history, some showing the depths that were reached by men so desperately cold and hungry.

This model takes a different view, turning the tables to look at an unseen army from the point of view of its leader. And having seen his hopes for victory shattered, he leaves them to their fate under the command of Murat, and makes for Paris to raise a new force.

Stormtroopers' kit

The Stormtrooper's 54mm miniature is a simple model; the kit consists of only three resin parts, one of which is the base. The other two make up the main casting of the figure, and a separate piece takes care of the left arm and hand. A length of brass rod is included for the 'walking stick' that Napoleon is grasping.

All the parts are well moulded, with no sign of air bubbles or mould misalignment. In fact, they were a joy to deal with, as there was very little to clean up. The parts are shown in **Photo 1.**

The only change I made to the model was to substitute a shaved down toothpick for the brass rod that was supplied for the walking stick. One thing that did rather catch me, however, was the size of the model. I knew Napoleon was a short chap, but this model is really diminutive. It's probably because I've overdosed on so many continental offerings that coming back to a true 54mm figure is a bit of a shock. That's exactly what this model is though, a true 54mm tall figure, but with all that said, it's very pleasant to paint.

Painting the fleshy bits

Although there's not much flesh on show, the first port of call was the face. I'd already primed the model with some Games Workshop (GW) Skull White acrylic, mixing the first coat with some isopropyl alcohol. After that, I added a second coat of the same colour, but thinned this with a little water.

Once this had dried I began adding undercoats, and for these I used three layers of a mix of Humbrol Flesh 61, GW Orc Brown (a sand colour) and a little Skull White to lighten the mix. By adding thin coats of paint, none of the detail is lost as the colour builds up, and after these acrylics had dried I began adding the oil colours.

I started by adding a coat of Mars Brown, getting this into all the recessed detail, and then removing any excess paint with a large soft brush. By constantly wiping the brush on an old t-shirt, the excess

Photo 1. Stormtrooper's 54mm miniature is a simple model, the kit consists of only three resin parts, one of which is the base, the main casting is the complete body except for the separate piece which takes care of the left arm and hand. The length of brass rod is included for the 'walking stick.'

Views around the finished model, which was attached to a simple scenic base modelled onto an Armstrong Bases 50mm square small wooden plinth. Ice was made from super glue spread thinly onto cling film and an activator squirted on to give a good representation of sheet ice. Snow is caster sugar and French chalk sprinkled onto wood glue and sealed with thin mists of hairspray.

paint was removed, and gradually the undercoat began to show through. At this point I swapped to a fine pointed (No.1) Winsor & Newton sable brush, to add in the mid-tone. This colour was a mix of Winsor & Newton's Flesh Tint, Mars Yellow and Titanium White in an approximate ratio of 4:1:1. Very small amounts of the mid-tone were added onto the upper areas of detail, gently blending this in to the Mars Brown colour while it was still wet. Again by wiping the brush on the t-shirt, excess paint was removed and this stopped too much paint building up on the surface of the model.

Close up of the coat and braid painted to the method set out on Lou Masses' Website.

For highlights, I painted on Titanium White, trying to work in even smaller areas than with the mid-tone, and again using a fine brush to apply the paint and then to blend it in.

Admittedly, on such a small area as the face on this model, it's very difficult to blend colours and not just have all of them mush into one grubby mess. That's where patience and a fine brush come in. If, however, you find this difficult, try letting each colour dry, and then layer the next colour on top. Obviously the colours then won't truly blend, but it's easier to get rid of any errant paint - simply wash it off with some white spirit, and gain more control over what is being applied to the model at that particular moment.

Once the paint had dried, I added a heavily thinned wash of Burnt Umber to the lower cheeks and under the brim of the hat on the forehead. Some Carmine oil paint was also thinned, and was added to the tip of the nose and also the cheeks. Again I allowed this to dry fully before painting in the eyes.

'Worst eyes I've painted in ages!"

I've already mentioned how small this model is, well the eyes took me an age to get, to be honest, passable. I think that these are the worst eyes I've painted in ages. It's no fault of the kit, I hasten to add, just poor effort on my part, mixed with frustration. I spent three hours trying to get them right, using dark brown oils, to mark them out, but I just couldn't seem to get them exactly how I wanted them to look. (Yes, pun intended!)

Eventually I admitted defeat, and just stuck with them as you see them, which whilst a bit on the scary and staring side, are about the best that I managed.

I was probably trying to put too much into so small an area, as I was aiming to have the colour of the iris and also the pupil, together with a tiny white catch light. Maybe I should just have stuck with a dark colour and the catch light and left it at that.

"A joy to paint!"

The rest of the model was plain sailing in comparison. The greatcoat was a joy to paint, using an undercoat of GW Forest Green and building on top of that with oil colours, using a mix of Prussian Blue and Mars Yellow as a shadow and mid-tone (more of the Yellow for the lighter colour) and then adding both Mars Yellow and Titanium White (mixed together) for the highlights.

The boots were painted very intricately (you'll have to believe me because they're mostly hidden!) However, being honest and knowing that they were likely to be hidden in some deep snow, and also powdered with more of the white stuff, I did only a basic shadow, mid-tone and highlight on them. I used a very dark brown (Mars Brown and Mars Black mixed) lightening it marginally for the mid-tones and highlights.

"An old trick of Phil Kessling's..."

For the fur trims I used and old trick of Phil Kessling's, beginning with an almost black oil colour which was the same as the shadow colour on the boots actually - waste not want not. This was applied after thinning it with a little white spirit, so that it ran into all the recessed details easily. After being left for around half an hour (just about enough time to make and consume a up of tea), the mid-tones and highlights were applied.

To paint the mid-tones I used some more of the Mars Brown, and then the highlights were from Titanium White. It's important here to use plenty of paint, allowing a thickness to build up on the model. Simply dabbing it on roughly so that brush marks show, mimicking the fur. The art of the method is to apply enough paint to give the ruffled look of fur, but not to allow too much of the light colour onto the area so that it completely obscures the darker colours beneath. This same method was used for the edging of the hat and coat.

The only bright colour on the figure is the upper area of the hat. This I did in a subdued red, using an undercoat of Humbrol Scarlet 60, mixed with a little GW Forest Green to knock back the brightness of the red. Over this I added Carmine oil colour, again adding a little bit of green (the mid-tone from the coat colour), and then using some small amounts of Scarlet to pick out the highlights.

The hands were painted to depict white gloves. I began by strengthening the primer white with more of the GW Skull White. Over this I added a thinned wash of Payne's Grey oil colour, and then added the main part of the gloves with an off-white mix of Payne's Grey and some Titanium White. Highlights were simply more of the Titanium White.

"And finally - the braiding!"

If the truth be known, I don't like doing braid. It's a pain to get the balance right between it looking totally flat and lifeless, and having it look like beaten metal rather than cloth.

I'd visited Lou Masses' Website just prior to painting this model, and he's got two excellent articles on how to paint braiding in miniature. So I thought I'd give it a try. The basic idea is to paint the braid with flat colours - in this case an assortment of brown and yellow (GW Bubonic Brown, Orc Brown acrylics, etc.) And the trick to making it look metallic is to put a wash over the top once it's all finished with a thinned gold colour.

Obviously Lou's method on his Website is a lot more detailed, and I encourage you to go and visit his site (address supplied at the end of this article), but the foregoing gives the bones of the method - and I think it works. Thanks Lou.

The arm was glued in place, and it's such a good fit that no remedial work is necessary (filler or paint) to hide the joint at the shoulder, it simply looks like a seam line in the material of the coat.

I added the replacement toothpick walking stick through the left hand, having stained the wood with some Burnt Umber oil paint earlier on. I intentionally left the stick too long, so that it would provide a further location for glue to fasten the figure into position on the base.

The figure posed against a photo backdrop of a winter scene - an appropriate method of display for Napoleon in his cold weather wear.

"Now for some ice and snow"

I wanted something simple for the base, so that the figure wasn't upstaged by its surroundings, and for this I selected a relatively small plinth from Armstrong Bases - about 50mm square.

To make the corner of a frozen lake, I added super glue (the thick gel type works best) to some cling film (saran wrap for our friends in the USA) that had been stretched across the top of an old jar. The glue is spread relatively thin, but not necessarily too evenly, and then hit with a quick squirt of activator. This produces a very good imitation of sheet ice.

I cut a small section of this and glued it in place on one corner, then added a slope of Milliput over the rest of the base to build up a thickness that would eventually be the snow. I added a small tree root into the putty too, covering one side and the top of this with the Milliput to hint that the snow has been drifting.

While the Milliput was still soft, I pushed Napoleon's feet into it, allowing them to form footprints that he would finally be standing in. I also added a couple more footprints to show where he'd walked, and also a couple of holes for where the stick had poked into the snow.

Once the putty had cured, it was painted in a very pale blue acrylic colour (GW Moody Blue and a lot of Skull White) and then a mix of caster sugar and French chalk were sprinkled on over the top of some wood glue. To seal this in, a couple of thin mists of hairspray were added. (Thank you Frances dear - even though you did have to buy some more because I left it upstairs in the modelling room, sinner that I am!)

For a final touch, some longer grass was glued into position, although I may have been better served if I'd added this prior to the dusty snow mix being sprinkled on.

Napoleon was finally glued into position, and a small amount of the snow mix added around and on top of his boots, on his shoulders and hat, and along the bottom of his cloak.

Final thoughts

This is a lovely little model. I can't praise it enough really. It's simple to put together, nicely posed, and although tiny, does emit a presence all of its own.

It is ridiculously cheap too at £12.50. The hardest part to paint was definitely the eyes, although I'm sure that I was making a mountain out of a molehill and it does make a nice addition to any Napoleonic display.

References

Collins Encyclopaedia of Military History - Dupuy & Dupuy.
De Fontenoy a Waterloo - Michel Petard.
Lou Masses site at LRM Military Miniatures
https://home.comcast.net

Availability

The figure costs £12.50 plus p&p from Stormtroopers, 4 Collinson Court, Church Steet, Frodham, Cheshire WA6 6PN.
enquiries@stormtroopers.co.uk
www.stromtroopers.co.uk ■

He Died With His Boots On!

Stan Taylor works in plaster and readily available material for his models. He describes how he produced a model of the famous American General George Armstrong Custer mounted on his horse, prior to the battle at the Little Big Horn

George Armstrong Custer and his famous last stand is one of the enduring legends of the old American West. He is right up there with Earp, Cody and Hickok and many more in the pantheon of notables who peopled the Western expansion of America. Custer, at the scene of his final encounter with the Indians, provides, perhaps, the most charismatic personality of that colourful period.

There are many versions of the last stand, in literature, in painting and in film, but much about the reality of that momentous battle is shrouded in mystery, not helped by the spin and bias of interested factions after the event. The sole survivor of the last stand on the Army's side was in no position to help clarify the confused conceptions of what happened prior to and during the battle, if that survivor was Captain Keogh's badly wounded horse, Comanche - a source of information beyond the reach of subsequent inquiries! Incidentally, Comanche recovered from his wounds and went on to live another 15 years.

The Battle of the Little Bighorn was something of a pyrrhic victory for the Indians. Although they triumphed over Custer, it sealed their fate in the face of the hardening attitudes in Washington and the train of events set in motion for the final elimination of the 'Indian threat'.

Custer on film

The facts of Custer's life are vivid enough without the embellishments of the Hollywood dream-machine. *They Died With Their Boots On* (Warner Bros. 1941) is the title of a film in which the screen-idol, Errol Flynn, gave a highly glamorized portrait of the man, a picture of Custer the men who served with him certainly would not have recognized.

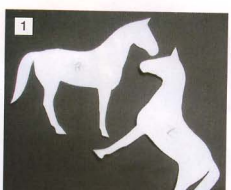
There was, however, one fortunate resource, which was able to establish a little more of the reality rather than the myth; photography around the time of the Civil War and beyond had reached a new status as an art form with the rapid improvements in lens quality and speed of emulsions. War photographer Matthew Brady was around to provide an extensive chronicle of the Civil War and the many personalities who fought in it. Custer features in numerous photographs of the time, which end any doubts about his true likeness.

I've always been intrigued by the history of the American West and the vibrant characters who peopled it, so it seemed only natural that I should look to that great period for a likely personality as the subject of a model - and who better than George Armstrong himself!

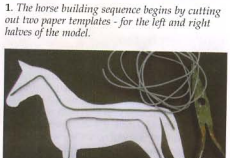
A different horse

Readers may be familiar with my article in *Military Modelling* (Vol.35 No.5) on the Polish Lancer of 1939 which described the making of a model in plaster-of-Paris. The model of Custer described here was also made of plaster, but I adopted a different and more accurate approach to fashioning the horse which the modeller may find easier to follow.

The greater accuracy lies in the use of cartridge-paper templates of both the left and

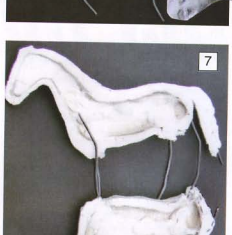


1. *The horse building sequence begins by cutting out two paper templates - for the left and right halves of the model.*

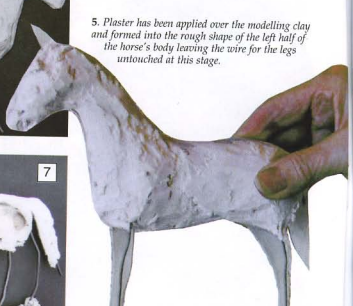


2. *Florists wire is glued to the paper templates.*

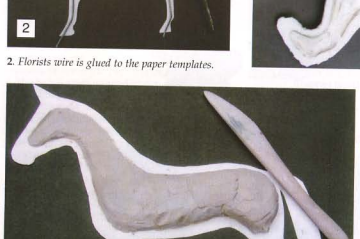
6. *The right side of the horse with its paper template removed and the modelling clay removed from the interior.*



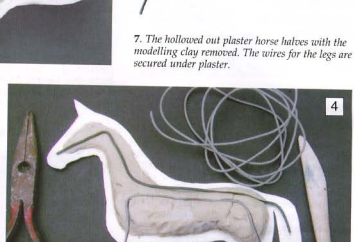
7. *The hollowed out plaster horse halves with the modelling clay removed. The wires for the legs are secured under plaster.*



5. *Plaster has been applied over the modelling clay and formed into the rough shape of the left half of the horse's body leaving the wire for the legs untouched at this stage.*



3. *Each template has modelling clay or any suitable material pressed onto it, shaped and tapered towards the front end of the horse, leaving a wide margin around it for the application of plaster.* 4. *The clay provides an anchor for the wire, which is cut and bent to shape with pliers to follow the contours of the template. (Part of the wire should remain proud of the clay in order to provide a purchase for the plaster when it is applied.)*



right sides of the horse **(Photo.1)**, which enables each half to be modelled on a flat surface which is much easier than building plaster up on a previously constructed frame.

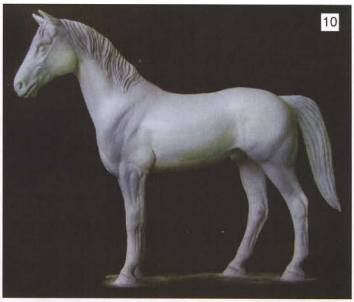
Each template has modelling clay or any suitable material (Plasticine?) pressed onto it, shaped and tapered towards the front end of the horse, leaving a wide margin around it for the application of plaster. **(Photo.3)**. The clay will provide an anchor for the wire, which is cut and bent to shape with pliers to follow the contours of the template. **(Photo.2)**. Part of the wire should remain proud of the clay in order to provide a purchase for the plaster when it is applied.

Plaster can be built up with a palette knife or other suitable implement when it is no longer a liquid, but about to turn into that soft buttery consistency just before it sets.

In the previous article wire from a coat hanger was used to construct the frame of the model, but this time the wire is of a much more flexible nature; in fact the sort of wire found in most garden centres that is rigid enough to give internal support to the model. A small coil of it is reasonably priced and will provide more than enough for the project.

When both templates have been treated in this way and the plaster carefully applied to follow the outline of the horse, the two halves can be removed from the working base, the templates peeled off and the clay removed. The resulting two hollow halves of the model can now be stuck together; in this case, liquid plaster was used, but other adhesives may serve just as well. Before sticking the pieces together it's a good idea to score the joint's edges to provide a key.

So now we have a model of a horse, albeit roughly hewn, with wire legs sticking out from the main body. Once this has been



8. *Both halves joined with either plaster or glue and the leg wires secured to a wooden base ready for carving and the further stages of the modelling process.* **9** *&* **10.** *The finished horse.* **11.** *A separator was placed between wire and saddle and plaster was applied in situ so that the legs and pelvis fit snugly to the horse and saddle. After removing the figure, any further carving or addition of plaster were made.*

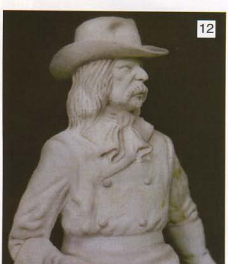
stuck firmly onto a prepared base, further carving and shaping can be carried out before making the surface of the model as smooth as possible with fine sandpaper.

When the horse is finished and before any surface treatment is carried out in priming and painting, it is as well to make as much of the horse furniture by building it up on the model.

Shabrack

The shabrack (saddle cloth) is the first item and is made in situ from papier mâché. Paste is usually used for making papier mâché, but in this case PVA was the medium, resulting in what is virtually a plastic end product. Several layers of small pieces of torn newspaper were built up on the back of the horse, each piece being coated with PVA. The paper pieces are torn rather than cut because the ends feather out thus avoiding hard edges. This helps to provide a smoother finish to the complete item.

In order to prevent the papier mâché from sticking to the horse's back some sort of separator is needed; as mentioned in the Polish lancer article, the thin plastic sheet from junk mail envelopes between horse and papier mâché will do the trick. When the papier mâché was thoroughly dried out it was removed and trimmed with scissors to its characteristic shape and returned to the



12. *Getting a good likeness to Custer's facial features on plaster the size of a marble presented some difficulty.*

13. *The horse was airbrushed in acrylics after first spraying the model with an oil based paint to seal the plaster.*

horse's back where plaster was built up on the papier mâché and carved and shaped to represent the saddle.

Photo 14 shows the completed combination of horse cloth and saddle with a single edging of braid that was subsequently modified to show the correct style of braiding for an officer's shabrack. The number seven at the corners was also removed because I was not absolutely sure of its authenticity, something that can be remedied after further research.

General McClellan's saddle

The McClellan saddle was a fearsome looking contraption. Designed by Major-General George Brinton McClellan (1826-85), it found no favour with the troopers and what the horse thought of it hasn't been recorded!

Custer had a nickname for it, the more polite interpretation of which was 'hard backside'. In spite of his nickname and no doubt because he was a law unto himself, he would have sought a more comfortable seat - but the McClellan saddle was standard US Army issue and that is the version shown on the model.

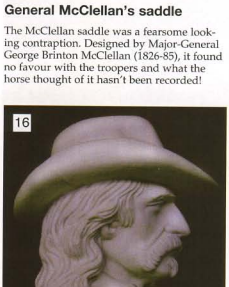
Custer the figure

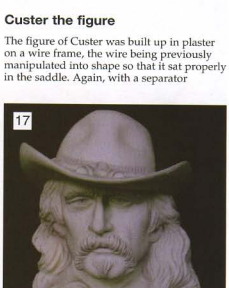
The figure of Custer was built up in plaster on a wire frame, the wire being previously manipulated into shape so that it sat properly in the saddle. Again, with a separator between wire and saddle, plaster was applied in situ so that the legs and pelvis fit snugly to the horse and saddle. **(Photo 11)**. Further carving and additions of plaster were now carried out on the figure, which was removed from the saddle for the purpose.

Gaining a likeness to the facial features on plaster the size of a marble presented some difficulty, but modelling long hair and a bushy moustache takes you more than half way! **(Photo 12)**.

Although Custer had a penchant for designing his own uniforms, there are a number of photographs which show him wearing one of the more comfortable buckskin jackets which were quite widely worn at the time - and it is this more colourful dress which was chosen for the model.

Some of the more fiddly details posed a problem. Carving the fringing on the jacket for instance is difficult and not very precise in plaster, and the problem was finally resolved by applying individual pieces of twine with tweezers and PVA adhesives, and perhaps the least enjoyable part of making this model.



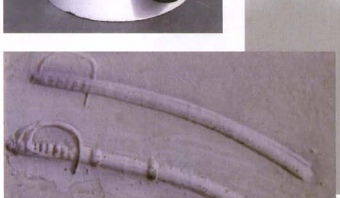


16 & **17**. *Getting a likeness of General Custer is not difficult as there are contemporary photographs of him enabling the author to produce a plaster bust, included here for reference and interest.*

Carving a sword mould

As always, the smaller details on a scratch built model prove to be the most difficult to make. The sword, for instance, was made by engraving the shape into a piece of plaster to form a mould; this was then filled with PVA, woodworking adhesive since it sets to a quite hard consistency. While the PVA was still liquid in the mould, a piece of stiff wire was inserted to provide a backbone and when dry, the whole assembly can be lifted out to provide a positive replica of the engraved shape. **(Photo 15)**.

The rings of the scabbard were formed from thin brass wire and also embedded in the adhesive before it set. When engraving any detail into plaster it should be remembered that the casting would be a mirror image of the engraved shape. Once out of the mould further work can be carried out on the sword to tidy it up.



ABOVE & BELOW: Tack and other fitting have been applied to the horse, which awaits the addition of Custer's figure. **14**. *The first attempt at the horse cloth and the McClellan saddle. The single row of braid was adapted to the broader double row pattern evident on the finished model and the number '7' removed.* **15**. *A mould for the sword was engraved into plaster and the part cast as a plain and flat-backed positive in PVA woodworking glue.*

Of course, one side of the sword will be flat and featureless, but this is of no consequence since that is the side that will be stuck to the saddle. The hilt basket was formed from the core wire of a piece of heavy-duty electric cable, but any wire of the right scale would be suitable.

Tack

Some of the strapping on the model was made from lead foil, but in the main I stuck to my old method of impregnating a piece of cloth with a suitable oil colour and cutting it into strips. At one time making the tiny buckles from thin brass wire was difficult, but manageable, however, some loss of dexterity in my fingers has prompted an easier approach to the problem. I don't know how far this would be acceptable to the purists, but individual buckles were painted in gold paint onto a strip of the aforementioned cloth then cut out and assembled.

The saddle bags were shaped with a scalpel from an India rubber and stuck to a shaped piece of bookbinder's leather (which I just happened to have in my bits-and-pieces box!) Painted matt black, the assemblage was draped quite neatly over the hindquarters of the horse. Buckles and straps were stuck on as previously described.

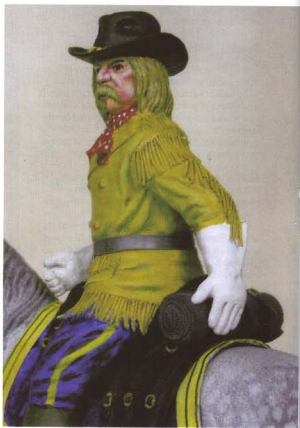
The stirrups were made from thin aluminium salvaged from a back-plate of an old gas fire we'd had removed. (I just knew it would come in handy one day!) Protective covers for the stirrups were made from cartridge paper, treated with PVA and painted black. The side bits of the bridle were made from thin brass wire, shaped and hammered flat on the anvil of my modeller's vice.

Painting

Painting was done in acrylics except for the undercoat of the horse, which was spray-painted with an oil-based paint that also served as a size for sealing the plaster.

For me, acrylics are so much easier than oil colours, especially since water can be used not only in the mixing, but also in cleaning implements and brushes. Apart from the horse, which was airbrushed, the rest of the model was hand painted with the usual array of sable and nylon brushes. As for the composition of the various colours, the whole thing was a hit-or-miss process for me, making it up as I went along, just trying out mixtures on paper before applying them to the model - so I have no precise analysis of how I arrived at any particular colour.

Early stages in the painting process for horse and rider. The horse has no tack, but has the modified horse cloth with a double row of braid in place.



Side arms and holsters

One detail missing from the model is the pistol holster, usually carried on the left of the belt with the butt towards the right, which provided a cross-draw.

In most Westerns it's assumed that the preferred sidearm was the Colt .45 revolver, but as suited his character, Custer chose to be different. The Colt pistol may have been army issue, but he favoured his pair of custom-built, pearl-handled Webley pistols, very much the same pattern revolver that became standard issue for British army officers. It is said that Custer's personalized pistols were found near his body after the battle, but what happened to them subsequently is beyond my knowledge. I guess that Custer would have carried the pistols into battle in saddle holsters rather than about his person, but I have no real evidence to support this. Of course, if the modeller wished to show Custer charging into battle, pistols blazing, then the type of pistol would be significant, but in a more static model it would be almost completely hidden in the black, flapped holster carried by most cavalry personnel.

The model is eight inches tall from the base to the crown of the hat, a little smaller than the Polish lancer model, but probably still not a recognized scale size, which ruled out the use of any commercial fittings - but meeting the challenge was part of the fun!

ABOVE: The finished model of horse and rider stands just over eight inches tall.

LEFT: The composition of the various colours is a hit-or-miss process for me. I make it up as I go along, trying out mixtures on paper before applying them to the model. I have no precise analysis of how I arrived at any particular colour!

Photos

All the photographs were taken on a digital camera, and in the absence of a computer, they were printed directly from the camera card. I still have mixed feelings about the quality of digital photographs when compared with those from my old Nikon SLR, but digital is more convenient in some respects and certainly more immediate, and as they say, it's here to stay!

Although plaster-of-Paris is the medium for scratch-building the Custer model, I should imagine that the number of self-hardening materials available to the modeller would serve as well with this technique. Happy modelling! ■

SMALL SCALE SCENE

A monthly column for military vehicle modellers compiled by ROBIN BUCKLAND

- **E-mail: robin@rbuckland.freeserve.co.uk**
- **Website: www. rbuckland.freeserve.co.uk**

It was at Euro Militaire this year that I spotted a certain 1:35 scale kit on the stand of LSA Models. To be more precise, it was three kits, as a large AFV Club kit, which proudly advertised being the first genuine 3-in-1 kit.

Well, it is true there really are three complete *SdKfz 251* variants in the box, produced apparently in a limited edition of 2,000 kits. Two different *Ausf D* variants and one *Ausf C*, these were the first examples I had seen of the AFV Club version of the ever-popular Hanomag. However, it is clearly a bit of a marketing dig at their rival manufacturer, Dragon. It is Dragon who has been doing a number of '3-in-1' kits in the last year or so, but actually it is three different options for the one vehicle kit that is in the box. Hence the AFV Club slogan of a 'genuine' 3-in-1.

It can be interesting to be sitting on the sidelines and smile at the marketing competition between the two manufacturers, but equally it is we modellers who are fortunate to reap the benefit. The result in this case is that the three kits together work out at a substantial saving over buying all three separately. While I have yet to build them, knowing of the normal quality of AFV Club kits and having looked through the mass of parts and instruction booklet, these look really good and do offer good competition to the equally fine Dragon kits. I'm looking forward to putting these together, but for now I'd recommend looking out for this particular AFV Club bargain. *(At an rrp of £44.99 they work out good value at around £11 and change each! See the Pocketbond ads. Ed.)*

SHQ

More now from SHQ and their range of metal 1:76 scale models. This time we can talk about two variants, the early and late, Matador truck. Perhaps many will remember this for being in combination with the 5.5in gun as an early 1:76 scale model from Airfix, but while not a bad kit, that did have some issues. Now SHQ have done the two versions of this gun tractor, including the seating arrangements inside the main load bed. I thought the way they have done the cab was interesting. The lower part of the cab is cast as a single piece then the upper half has the window framing, but with another part for the actual roof panel, which is a difference between the early and later variants. The chassis and axles are very basic, with plain axles, not differentials on them. However, they are good and strong, which they need to be to take the weight of a substantial metal model such as this one. Assembly instructions are provided, along with an exploded assembly diagram that is a good guide. I liked the detail on the top of the tilt, along with the two panels above the crew access doors cast open in the rolled up position. The parts all have good, clear location points, which is important for the mudguards, both front and back. The SHQ range is available direct from The Granary, Burley Lane, Ash, Basingstoke RG25 3AG.

Later version of the Matador tractor - late version - from SHQ in 1:76 scale.

CMSC's 1:72 scale British Starstreak.

CMSC

The 1:72 scale range of resin and metal models from CMSC now includes another couple of variants from the CVR(T) series and this time it's the more recent examples of *Stormer* and *Starstreak* with the slightly longer chassis, with six roadwheels. The *Starstreak* is one I have seen 'in the flesh' a couple of times, including firing at a 'Firepower' demonstration at Larkhill, on Salisbury Plain, back in 2002. The main hull, along with stowage boxes and other details are excellent quality resin castings.

Horst, the man behind CMSC for all these years, is very particular in getting the quality right in his model range, and it shows with some crisp, clean castings. The road wheels, the track and many other smaller details are cast in white metal, and are also well-detailed parts. An assembly diagram along with extensive and detailed construction notes is included with the model.

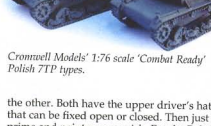
You do need to use a pin vice with a 1mm drill to drill a bit more into the hull for the locating rods of the road wheels, which then super-glue into place in the resin. There is a little clean up required on the wheels just to remove their casting feed points. Give these a chance to set and the metal track is ready to be fitted. The track comes in a number of strips and I prefer to start around the sprocket, and then work round from there. It takes about two and a half strips to fit each track run. Once all the small details are in place, give the model a coat of primer to achieve an even finish for the resin and metal parts, then paint to your choice - green/black or sand of course! CMSC are available direct, or if you want to order via the internet, then only via PDI Model Supplies, 26 Treborough, North Furzton, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK4 1LR. By phone or fax: 01908 505988 or PSmith6328@aol.com in this instance, my thanks to PDI Models for my example.

Cromwell Models

Some more new releases to come from Cromwell Models in their Combat Ready series are a couple of Polish 7TP tanks. One is the earlier version, with twin machine gun turrets and the other the single turreted type. In both cases these are simple enough, as we have come to expect from the Combat ready range. The hull is a single piece casting, complete with running gear and tracks. The additional parts come as the turrets, the machine gun barrels in the case of the early version, and the small gun barrel and turret hatch for the other. Both have the upper driver's hatch that can be fixed open or closed. Then just prime and paint as you wish. For the Polish tanks, the three-colour scheme is the most interesting in my thoughts. I know there are plastic injection kits of these nowadays, but there are many wargamers and modellers who simply find these easier in terms of assembly and going straight to painting and finishing. For wargamers, who may want them in quantity, this leads to a significant time saving to get a wargames unit onto the gaming table. Cromwell Models, 6/6 The Quadrangle, 57 Ruchill Street, Glasgow, Scotland G20 9PX.

'Flames of War' 1:100 scale British 2pdr antitank gun Portee.

Cromwell Models' 1:76 scale 'Combat Ready' Polish 7TP types.



'Flames of War'

Going back to some pieces I found at the Colours wargames show a few months ago, some readers may remember the Battlefield range of 1:100 scale models I have mentioned previously. These are now sold under the banner of 'Flames of War', as they fit with a comprehensive set of wargames rules as well. At Colours there were a couple of trade stands selling the range and being of interest, they attracted my attention and I bought a couple more of their vehicle kits. The two in this case were a Sherman Dozer and a CMP 2pdr Portee. The Sherman's main vehicle body and the turret are cleanly cast in resin, with the main casting feed plugs already removed. The remaining details are metal castings, to include the Portee's 2pdr gun, plus windscreen, wheels, driver, etc., and the gun barrel, hatches, commander figure, dozer blade, supports and trackwork on the Sherman. Assembly is straightforward with super glue. Just give a coat of primer prior to painting. I think the end results have bags of character and are ideal for putting into a diorama or two. The 'Flames of War' range, which comes from New Zealand by the way, is well-worth looking out for, and they are something a bit different. I bought mine at Chelifer Books' stand, but there are other stockists in the UK.

Wargames South

While mentioning some wargames items, there's more news in the even smaller scale of 1:144 from Wargames South. Cast in white metal these are very neat little models indeed and the latest three additions to their range are, T-34/76, Bedford OY 3-ton GS truck and a cast hull Sherman M4A1. All are simple metal models, the Sherman with just turret, hull and two sets of running gear and the

Vickers Light Tank Mark IVa in 1:76 scale from Matador Models.

ABOVE: AFV Club's 1:48 scale Tiger I kit.
LEFT: Alpine Miniatures' 1:35 scale Russian tank crew figures.

same applies to the T-34, whereas the Bedford has cab, GS body, tilt, chassis and wheels. They are small enough to happily assemble with super glue, or you can use solder if you prefer.

Perhaps the only one I thought wasn't quite captured as well as the others was the Sherman, where the cast hull just looks a touch out in shape to my eye, but not really a problem if you plan on using them en masse on a gaming table. The Bedford and the T-34 are my favourites, and they look excellent. I remain impressed with this range, and of course you will have noted that their scale matches that used by Dragon in their growing series of 1:144 scale models. Available from Wargames South, 1 St Giles Close, Ise Lodge, Kettering, Northants NN15 5HA.

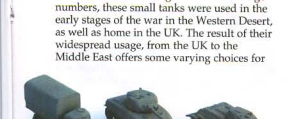
Matador Models

More new kits and conversions keep on coming from Matador Models. The first is another conversion for the old Airfix 1:76 scale M3 half-track. This includes the quad mounting, replacement front wheels and additional body parts to build the M16 with a quad .50cal mounting. It's all cast in resin, and with instructions and an exploded assembly diagram to guide you; this one is nicely made and the resin castings are of excellent quality.

Actually, the various parts give you the options of building any of the M13, M14, M16, M17 and M16A1 types. With different patterns in the quad mounting, and the gun shields, along with different rear stowage boxes and side plates, you can make some interesting and unusual variants of the SPAA mounting. The instruction sheet gives clear details of the different options and there are good stocks of the old Airfix half-track readily available, and despite the problems that beset Airfix and Humbrol, great to see they have been purchased by another well-established UK hobby company - Hornby. So despite fears, it seems the brands of both Airfix and Humbrol are set to continue.

The second release to feature this month is a complete kit this time, and offers another in Matador's series of British Light Tanks. The Light Tank Mark IV can be built as the basic version and as an "India Pattern", which has a different turret. Though not made in huge numbers, these small tanks were used in the early stages of the war in the Western Desert, as well as home in the UK. The result of their widespread usage, from the UK to the Middle East offers some varying choices for camouflage finish. The resin parts are beautifully cast and construction is really quite straightforward.

Carefully remove the parts from the sprues, and do take care not to break or damage some of the finer cast pieces, but other than that it really is no more complex than assembling a standard plastic kit. In some respects, such as the running gear, the one-piece casting actually makes it easier and the assembly instructions are clear and well-presented. Both are on sale now, and available direct from Matador Models, 6 Cliffe Road, Barton-on-Sea, New Milton, Hants BH25 7BP.



British Bedford OY 3-ton GS, American Sherman M4A1 and Russian T-34/76 in 1:144 scale from Wargames South.

Alpine Miniatures

To change subject type again, I always like to look out for model ranges that are new to me. One of these is for 1:35 scale AFV crew figures, and the American producer, Alpine Miniatures, who had a stand at Euro Militaire this year. The two examples I have are both full figures, in basic standing poses. One is a Russian tank commander, the other a Russian tank crewman.

The tank commander has a one piece resin cast body, that has just the two arms to fit to it and a choice of two heads, one in a standard tank crew padded helmet and the other in a standard officers' peaked cap. The quality of the casting and the detail in the uniform is delightful, and having seen them painted to a high standard on Alpine Miniatures stand at the show, I was impressed. I admit it takes me time to get figures painted to a finished state these days, as it all revolves around what work needs doing and what time is available. These, however, you only need to look at in the basic resin form to see how good they are. The basic tank crewman is every bit as good, though this time he also carries a pistol holster and the choice of heads gives the padded tankers helmet or the simple side cap. Alpine Miniatures, 2055 Center Ave., 15C, Fort Lee, NJ 07024, USA. Check them out on www.alpineminiatures.com or e-mail on info@alpineminiatures.com

AFV Club

Another interesting kit I found on LSA Models' stand at the London MAFVA show in October, was a 1:48 scale Tiger I (Late version), from AFV Club. I hadn't seen it before and was interested to see how good it was. Firstly, it includes a moulded-on *zimmerit* finish for the hull and turret. Etched brass parts are included for the engine deck screens and all the general plastic sprues are moulded to the high standard we have come to expect from AFV Club. Clearly this scale of model fits well with the expanding range being released by Tamiya, but I'd say this one really is very nice indeed. It is also reasonably priced at under £15, and one I rather enjoyed putting together. Keep an eye out for this one; I'll be interested to see if more follow it at some point. Available from LSA Models, 151 Sackville Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 3HD, Tel/fax: 01273 705420. orders@lsamodels.co.uk www.lsamodels.co.uk

Transfer Sheet

Now, good news with some new transfer releases from Editions Barbotin, the French producer of *Minitracks* magazine, and marketed under the banner of Miniprint. These two sets are both in 1:72 scale and both are for French vehicles. One is for the Char B1 bis, and is ideal for the re-released 1:76 scale Matchbox kit, now under the Revell label or for one by Retrokit or Al.by. As the Char B1 bis has been the subject of a recent book in their Trackstory series, there is little excuse these days to claim a lack of references to help you finish your model. The second set covers various other French army types from the early war period. This has French roundels along with geometric and card style symbols (clubs, spades, hearts and diamonds) in different colours. Add the registration plates and other bits to this list and you have a great resource of markings for both armoured and soft skin equipment models. My thanks to John at Pol Models who provided my examples and who stocks them here in the UK via Pol Models, 64 Cumberland Road, London W3 6EY. Tel: 020 8992 3822.

Publications

To close this month we come to the recent edition of *Tankette,* the A5 format magazine for members of MAFVA. It opens with a memorial comment to John Baumman, for 20 years the information officer for MAFVA, and who passed away this year.

Additional content covers the Studebakers US-6 2 ton truck, complete with 1:76 scale drawings, a number of book reviews, some comments on 'fast assembly armour' by both Italeri and Armorfast, and a modern German Artillery Gun Module Medium Weight SP Howitzer. Scale drawings included with this issue, as well as the Studebaker, are a 15in Siege Howitzer in 1:48 scale, and FS 5-ton Wrecker in 1:76 and a Crusader AA 3x20mm Oerlikon drawn in 1:35 scale. As always a useful collection of background information for any armour modeller. *Tankette* comes with membership of MAFVA, and details are available from Gary Williams, 45 Balmoral Drive, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire CW4 7JQ mafvahq@aol.com ■

Home-Made Moulds

Charles Buchanan concludes his four-part series on how to make moulds for miniature figures

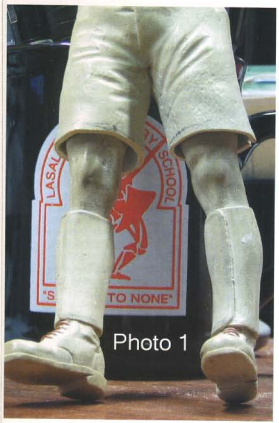


Photo 1

Photo 2

Photo 3

In articles one through three we covered a lot of complicated ground, and in this final segment I intend finishing off with a hodgepodge of minor essentials, all of which will hopefully enhance your work and give it that 'finished touch'.

Depending on your attention to detail, there may be a need to segment thigh regions because of an aesthetic requirement for negative space in between limb and trouser cloth. (**Photo 1**). Of course this all depends upon scale, but for me those deep undercuts give the work realism, so I always opt for them where I can.

For the professional, making a mould as per **Photo 1**, involving non-segmented thighs is straightforward, providing the pouring flue is attached to the top of the hips, thus allowing for top filling. In theory no air will become trapped, however if the mould is to be filled via flues attached to the feet, (**Fig 1a**), air is likely to become trapped all around both leg hems on the shorts, an option being block-forming the shorts or trouser bottoms where hem sits away from limb. Negative space would, therefore, have to be hand-carved later on. If you're producing a one-off, that's okay, but for reproduction purposes the extra work is not an option. Small air trap reservoirs may have to be built in beyond hemlines and trimmed after demoulding. (**Fig 1b**). Interestingly I've tried this and it does work to some degree, but never at a 100% success rate; there have always been air bubbles that needed filling.

Where flesh is to be exposed, keep proportions normal and at a point just above the proposed hemline; draw horizontal pencil marks around both thighs. (**Fig 2**). Mould a backing plate extending from the buttock area to just below the knee. (**Fig 3**). Ensure that it does not exceed high points and that when removed, clips back into place.

Using both pencil lines as a guide, hacksaw through the thighs, and as discussed previously saw marks should be sanded down to a relatively smooth finish. Decide on plug length, then using this as a measurement tool, horizontally saw through the upper thighs, (**Fig 4**), discarding both cut-outs.

As you did with the waist, drill holes into thigh regions. Use a narrower gauge bolt as a template for both sleeves, making use of suitable lengths to assist in forming both cork-shaped plugs. (**Fig 5a**).

As you did with the waist seam, and to prevent swivelling, sink a hole next to the sleeve when it's in place. (**Fig 5b**). After lubricating the leg plugs and their bases, reinsert the upper thighs and lower leg regions back into your backing plate. Model putty into the spaces and once cured remove your work. Fill in any gaps with putty, sanding over seam lines to smooth things off and restore proportion.

Once you have completed both legs, mix enough putty for your figure's shorts or trousers and model them. (**Photo 2**). What works for me is flattening lengths of putty on a smooth wet surface using a makeshift rolling pin. This can be anything round and smooth, such as a glass bottle or stout plastic tubing. For purposes of neatness, I trim seam edges with scissors, and then mould both lengths around thigh segments, blending opposite edges on the thigh. Use the end of a modelling rod to create the usual crease lines etc.

For interest's sake, **Photo 3** shows part of a segmented figurine due to be dressed in a robe. Segmentation procedure was the same,

Fig 1a

Resin inlet flue

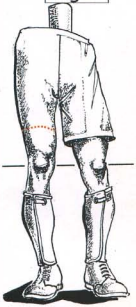
Resin & air escape flue

Tip: Unless well vacuumed, air will separate from moulding resin after being poured and become trapped in V-necked shapes not fitted with small air escape flues, such as trouser bottoms or boot edges. If you want to invert positive masters for moulding, ensure that air traps extend beyond seam lines for easy removal after demoulding.

Fig 1b

Tip: Many of these air reservoirs may need to be built into the lower hem line.

Fig 2



Tip: Thigh seam lines should lie just above trouser hemlines where they can't be seen once parts are assembled after painting.

Fig 3

Fig 4

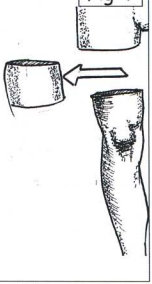


Fig 5a

Fig 5b

Fig 6

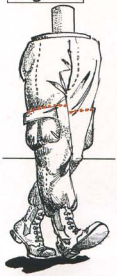


Fig 7

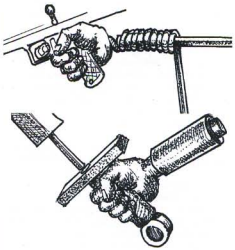


Fig 8

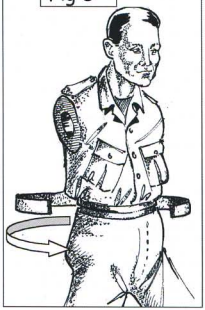
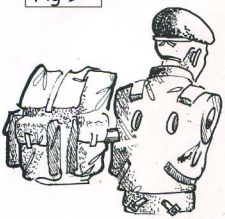
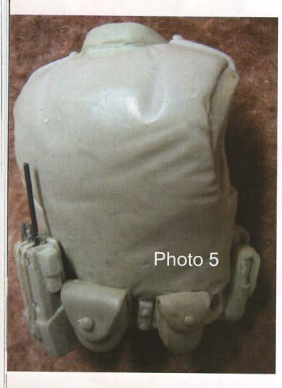


Fig 9



Tip: Drill the receiving holes, fit plugs, which extend out into the kit area, then model the removable items of equipment around them.



but if modelling long combat trousers is a part of your action plan, bear in mind that military trousers have extra pieces of cloth sewn to them in strategic areas for reinforcement, with horizontal seams running across thighs either just above or below cargo pockets, (**Fig 6**). These lines make ideal segmentation points and can be taken advantage of.

Making either a one or two-part mould for a hand and arm is relatively simple when the elbow isn't bent more than 45°. If it is, and the hand clasps something, it's probably a good idea to model the hand and keep it separate, using a sleeve as part of the forearm, into which a hand plug will slot. (**Photo 4**). I mention this because experience has taught me that air often gets trapped at fingertips and elbows, requiring pernickety filling after demoulding. On this occasion the sleeve diameter is very narrow, thus rendering a somewhat brittle piece of putty tubing, which easily cracks between thumb and forefinger if you're not careful.

The modelling process for the hand plug is slightly different, in that putty has to be modelled around the wire hand coil to form a wine cork-shaped plug. (**Fig 7**). As previously discussed gently insert this plug into the lubricated sleeve, working it backwards and forwards in an anti-locking manoeuvre. As a point of interest, I prefer modelling the hand before fashioning the plug because it's easier to animate at the wrist.

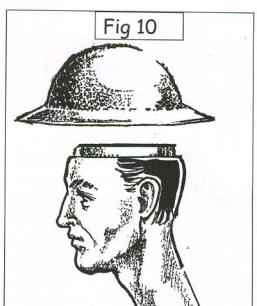
Where two parts of a seam butt up against each other, there is little need to fill any gaps if both surfaces are smooth. However, a seam can be hidden entirely if covered with something that forms part of an adjoining piece.

If you recall, I've previously mentioned the need to even up the sides of adjoining parts by sanding them smooth, for to hide a seam they must fit well together. Modelling a belt or strap around this joint will camouflage it, thus causing onlookers to keep on guessing. So fashion trousers and shirt lines to the point where they tuck under the waistbelt, but leave sufficient space for a belt between them.

Lightly lubricate the circumference of the hip joint only. Mix putty for a belt, flatten it out, and then model it around the waist. (**Fig 8**). It should only adhere to the upper chest piece, and when cured acts as an additional anti-swivel guide for both upper and lower parts. When curing, buckle and strap detail can be added, and in **Photo 5** you can see that I've included the utility belt detail on a Police officer figure I'm currently working on, all of which act as additional reinforcement.

Miscellaneous additions

Miscellaneous items can now be added, the most common being backpacks, ammunition pouches and water bottles, etc. Again shape will determine how much air can be expelled during pouring and curing processes, leaving you with more regions requiring filling after demoulding. To get around this problem, items of kit and equipment should be modelled separately, but capable of being slotted into place. So model the remainder of your figure's clothing, allowing it to cure, taking the steps



necessary to ensure that certain areas are depressed up against the body so as to accommodate straps under load.

Short plugs will be needed on equipment items so that they lock into position on your figure after painting and assembly. Receiving holes are therefore required, so sink them with a suitable drill bit into an area that will be concealed by the equipment item. (**Fig 9**). Depth varies according to scale, but holes should be deep enough to allow items to easily remain in place during delicate handling. Depending on the figure's load you may end up with more than just a few plugholes. (**Photo 6**). What's also interesting is that these plugs can be extended and used as pouring flues.

Headdress

Finally we look at the aspect of headgear. Painting under the peak of a cap is one thing, but getting the tip of your brush up against hair bordering ears is difficult when the brim of a helmet blocks your path. The best option here is lopping off the top of the head and modelling any headgear to fit.

Remove the top of the cranium, sanding saw marks to a smooth finish. Add a piece of flat putty immediately above the cut, with its circumference smaller than that of the severed forehead. (**Fig 10**). This addition acts as a key for the headgear, which you can now model. Besides allowing much easier painting, another benefit of this method is the chinstrap, which now doesn't have to be moulded up against the face, as it can be added after the fact once painting is complete.

In conclusion

Well fellow amateurs, in a nutshell there you have it. I cannot call it 'The method', because it's not, but it works for me, even though I'm positive I'll improve some part of it in time to come. I also regard it as good food for thought, a method I hope will be of benefit, and that you will be able to adapt it to suit your own needs. ■

'ALCOHOLICS!'

Chris Johnson models a Canadian Army M32A1B1 Tank Recovery Vehicle in 1:35 scale using various manufacturers' kit parts ...

I've always had a fascination with armoured support vehicles, probably because of the specialized equipment associated with them, and the M32 Tank Recovery Vehicle is arguably the best example of its type to emerge from the Second World War.

Equipped with a 60,000 pounds capacity Gar Wood winch, together with a front-hinged A-frame derrick, the M32 was a simple, yet ingenious design. It was capable of 15-ton overhead lifts with the boom elevated, and with it stowed above the hull, it could lift and tow a 10-ton load from the rear. It was also able to make straight pulls from the front, using the winch cable as a dragline, sometimes in combination with snatch blocks when it was necessary to change the direction of the pull.

As with all armoured recovery vehicles of that period, it was based on an existing tank design and, therefore, suffered from inherent problems such as a noisy and cramped crew compartment. The associated danger of a parted cable whipping around inside the vehicle, to the detriment of any crewmember within, was not to be discounted either.

'ALCOHOLICS' was one of two ARVs, together with a Sherman dozer (see 'CUDDLES', ***Military Modelling*** Vol.36, No. 5) in the Technical Troop of 'A' Squadron, Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians). Equipped with four troops of M4A3E8s in Korea, 'A' Squadron formed the armoured component of 25 Canadian Infantry Brigade in 1953. 'ALCOHOLICS' is an interesting modelling project as she's actually an M32A1B1, made recognizable by her horizontal volute sprung suspension (HVSS). In 1945, Baldwin Locomotive Works converted some 37 M32B1s into M32A1B1s.

Gathering the kits and bits

Italeri's M32 kit has been languishing in my pile of unbuilt kits for 20 years or so. It's more correctly a M32B1 as it's based on the cast hull M4A1. The major problem with the kit is that the upper hull is the 'big hatch' variant, which with the possible exception of an Israeli conversion, is incorrect for the M32 series. When I saw two images of 'ALCOHOLICS', I was finally motivated to build my own M32.

I decided to use the upper and lower hulls from the re-released DML M4A1 kit as a basis for the model, while the M32 kit would donate the ARV components, and Dragon Models' M4A3E8 'Albin F. Drzyk' kit would supply the required late production parts. It was clear from the beginning that there would be a considerable amount of trimming, repetitive test fitting, and bouncing around from one feature to another to ensure that everything fit properly as the project moved along. It would also be necessary to scratch build some minor component parts along the way.

Lower hull changes

I began construction on the lower hull by eliminating the vertical volute sprung suspension (VVSS) mounting points and making good with sheet plastic and filler. The underside of the hull has VVSS mounting bracket detail moulded on and this had to be sliced off and smoothed over. At the rear of the hull tub, I added the weld lines on the sponson floors, just forward of the grouser storage compartments, using .015in plastic rod. The weld texture was pressed into the rod after it was softened with cement, with the tip of a jeweller's screwdriver. I also added the grouser drain plugs to the sponson floors.

In checking images of the M32A1B1, it was apparent that it was fitted with late style, round canister air cleaners. None of my donor kits included this style of air cleaner so I made a quick call to Formations to order their set. Once they were installed, I added wing-nuts from the M4A1 kit to the bottom of the canisters. I used the rear hull plate and engine access doors from the M4A1 kit and I shaved off the solid moulded grab handle on the outer door and substituted a floral wire replacement for it.

'ALCOHOLICS' is repeated on the right side of the turret, spare sprockets are carried in brackets on the hull side and the front pintle hook is installed in this photograph. (Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) Museum courtesy Jason Bobrowich.)

Round air cleaner canisters from Formations together with a debris screen added to the underside of the hull. Also visible is the grouser compartment drain and sponson floor weld seam. The VVSS mounting bracket features have been removed from the belly plate and the hull side mounting holes are filled.

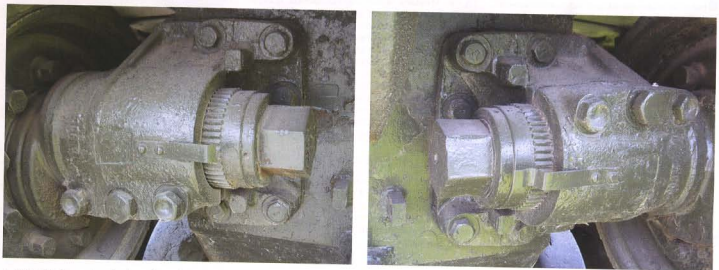
"Mistakes, I've made a few..."

The HVSS idler wheel mounts and track-adjusting assemblies came from the 'Albin F. Drzyk' kit. I added the spreading bolt that was missing on each piece, between the two clamping bolts. As Frank Sinatra's signature song says, "Mistakes, I've made a few..." and this is where I made my first really noticeable error. It was only after the model was completed that I noticed that Dragon have made their track adjusting assemblies 'handed' for installation on either the left or right sides, whereas one universal assembly is used in Shermans equipped with HVSS. One track adjusting assembly is simply turned upside down in relation to the other. I had the reference photos for this detail but I failed to notice it at the time.

A sanding drum chucked in my Dremel electric drill eliminated the slots in the turret opening and enlarged the opening to match the Italeri turret.

Getting it together

At the front of the M4A1 lower hull tub, I installed the sharp-nosed differential/final drive housing from the 'Albin F. Drzyk' kit. I also added oil drain plugs to the



A composite image showing how the universal track adjusting assembly is mounted on a Sherman equipped with HVSS. One is bolted onto the rear plate upside down, compared to the other. (Author.)

Scratch built stowage lockers, patterned on the M32 kit assemblies, mounted on a new engine access door.

underside of the housing. Lastly, I added the lines of bolt heads where the housing fastens to the lower hull sides.

With the hull tub assembled, I test fitted it with the upper hull to ensure that they would mate properly. The separate bolt strip for the sharp nosed final drive housing made it necessary to first remove the earlier production bolt strip that is incorporated in the M4A1 upper hull, to allow the two hull sections to fit together. This offending strip was cut out with a hobby knife and squared up with a file. I also opened up a dragline aperture in the glacis plate by marking it out, drilling out the hole and then squaring it up with a file. The dragline door was added in the open position.

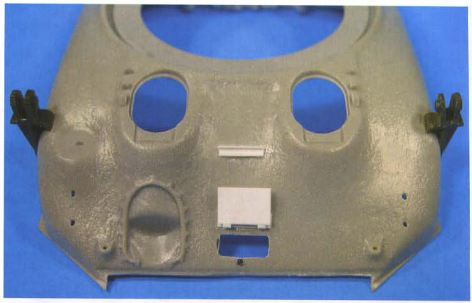
It was necessary to eliminate the slots in the turret opening in the upper hull and expand it to match the inside width of the M32 fixed turret. I accomplished this by chucking a woodworking-sanding drum in my electric drill to slowly sand away material while maintaining a circular opening. Finally, I filled the pioneer tool holes in the rear of the upper hull with various diameters of plastic rod.

Interior design

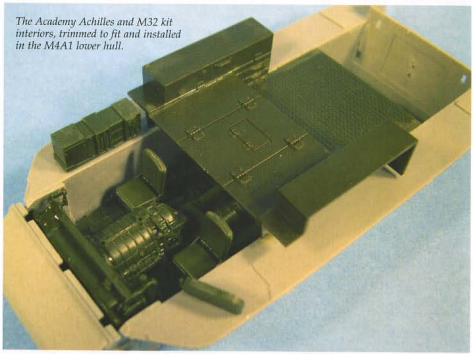
With the hull sections fitting together properly, it was time to address the interior. Italeri provide a basic crew compartment floor in their M32 kit and as I was going to display the winching cable hanging outside the front of the vehicle in its dragline configuration, it wasn't necessary to open the winch doors scribed on the floor. However, as I wanted to leave the driver's and assistant driver's hatch covers open, it was necessary to add some extra interior detail. Academy's M10 or Achilles kits contain a decent enough interior for the front crew compartment and after assembling it as a single unit, I installed it in the lower hull. Once it was glued in place, it was time for more test fitting to ensure the upper hull still fitted tightly. A sanding drum chucked in my Dremel tool proved useful in sanding the problem spots until everything fit properly again.

To eliminate any chance of seeing the empty engine compartment, I added a firewall to the upper hull and as vision into the interior through the machine gun ring would be restricted, I was satisfied in adding irregular shapes to the firewall to suggest detail. With the interior installed, I airbrushed the assembly with Tamiya Flat White XF2 and sealed it with Krylon clear matt spray. I then applied a dirty black oil colour wash to emphasize the detail and make it look soiled and well used.

At this point, I cut a length of nylon kite flying cord to represent the dragline, which was



DML M4A1 upper hull showing the dragline opening, door, jib boom pivot brackets, and angle iron step. The existing bolt strip for the differential/final drive housing has also been cut out.



The Academy Achilles and M32 kit interiors, trimmed to fit and installed in the M4A1 lower hull.

used for straight pulls from the front of the ARV. I painted the cable dark grey and knotted one end under the central crew compartment floor to secure it in place. Finally, I glued the upper and lower hulls together and filled and sanded the joints under the sponsons.

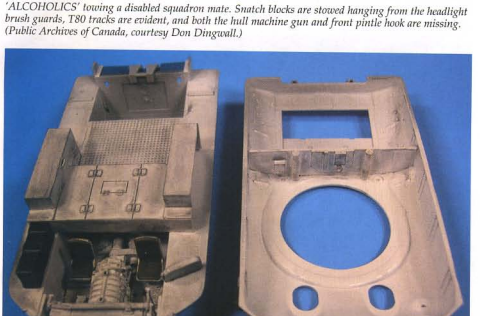
With the hull closed up, I added the exhaust tailpipes, and a photo-etched debris screen framed with plastic strips, under the rear overhang. I added locking bars to the armoured filler caps and grouser stowage box covers from sheet plastic. I also cemented the jib boom 'A' frame sockets from the M32 kit to the rear of the upper hull and drilled out the access hole for the engine crank.

New fenders

Not being satisfied with the HVSS track fenders supplied in Dragon's 'Albin F. Drzyk' kit, I thought I'd try my hand at fabricating my own, using soft drinks can aluminium for the job. Online images of the M32A1B1 show that the fenders were tack-welded to the bottom edge of the upper hull sides. I measured out the 7mm width, cut the fenders to length, and scored the bend for the 2mm lip with a hobby knife. I drilled the bolt holes in the fender lips with a pin vice and finally, I used my photo-etch bending tool to give the outside edge right-angled bends. The aluminium was easy to work with, and with two teenagers in the household, empty cans were readily available. For those of you so inclined, I'm sure that beer can aluminium could prove to be an even better source of material.

I used super glue to attach the fenders to the upper hull and short lengths of .015in plastic rod represented the tack welds along them. The left side fender runs full length while the right side fender is shorter, to accommodate the lifting cable running from the jib boom lifting arm to the winding drum on the sprocket. The fender support brackets were made from .020in plastic rod.

'ALCOHOLICS' towing a disabled squadron mate. Snatch blocks are stowed hanging from the headlight brush guards, T80 tracks are evident, and both the hull machine gun and front pintle hook are missing. (Public Archives of Canada, courtesy Don Dingwall.)



The interior painted and weathered. A basic firewall has been added to the upper hull and the correct final drive cover bolt strip is installed on the differential/final drive housing.

After the event!

After seeing images of my fenders and brackets, my friend Bob Wiber suggested that I might have used telephone wire with the insulation partly stripped off to replicate the hollow tube and threaded rod configuration on the actual vehicle. This would have been a better representation of the support brackets but I wasn't prepared to start over. Next time Bob!

I wasn't happy with the appearance of the Italeri stowage lockers that were mounted on the engine access door in the engine deck where I lost some detail when cleaning up the glue seams. I scratch built new ones together with a new access door from sheet plastic. At this point, with the references I was working with, I wasn't sure if 'ALCOHOLICS' had those lockers installed or not, so I covered both bases with the M4A1 kit-supplied 'clean' access door as well as my scratch built one with lockers.

Spare wheels

Since Shermans with horizontal volute spring suspension (HVSS) have different road wheels compared to those with vertical volute spring suspension (VVSS), I decided that I'd have to scratch build the brackets that held the spare wheels on the front of the turret. I used a HVSS road wheel for a pattern and thermo-formed narrow strips of plastic stock around it to get the correct curvature. I cut these formed strips in half and used two for each bracket. Strip plastic stock was also used for the crossmembers and these were glued to the curved pieces. I simply bent one end of the crossmembers at 90° angles to form the retaining lips.

I raided four wheels from the 'Albin F. Drzyk' kit to use for the required spares, two on the front of the turret and two on the rear. I chucked a grinding bit in my Dremel tool and ground away the wheel nuts and then drilled out the stud holes in all four. For the two wheels on the front of the turret, I glued on a thermo-formed retaining strap and added the hinge and latch detail. The spare wheels on the rear of the turret were held in place with retaining strips cut from an aluminium can and super-glued to brackets on the rear plate.

Turret fixtures and fittings

I used slices of plastic rod to represent the bolt heads on the turret flange that secured the fixed turret to the hull. I had no overhead references for this detail so I had to guess at the bolt spacing and quantity. The cable channel door on the front of the turret is different from that illustrated in the M32 manual or in several photos I have seen of M32s in Northwest Europe. I am assuming that this is a late production feature. I have seen only one photograph of this type in use in the Second World War, and it appears in Concord's *US Armored Funnies* by Steve Zaloga. I thermo-formed the door, to match the curvature of the turret face, and glued it on. The protective wings on either side of the door, together with the door hinges, were made from bits and pieces of various sized plastic scrap.

The commander's split cover hatch is a Dragon Models' item from the spares box. I replaced the solid moulded grab handle with a wire replacement, and added the periscope brush guard from the M32 kit. The .50 calibre machine gun, from the 'Albin F. Drzyk' kit, was a bit of artistic licence on my behalf, to add some interest.

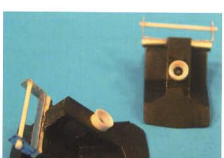
Figuring out the details

To this point in the project, I had been relying on just two images of 'ALCOHOLICS' and they left a lot to be desired when it came to figuring out the assorted detail on the vehicle. For one thing, I wasn't able to determine if or where the spare sprockets were mounted. Relying on the M32 manual, I added brackets to both sides of the turret and placed two spare sprockets on the right side. It was at this point that I had a stroke of luck. Jason Bobrowich, known for his modern Canadian armour models, passed along an image of 'ALCOHOLICS' that was of great assistance. As a result, I removed the spare sprockets and brackets from the turret and added them to the right side of the hull. I made the brackets for them from strips of aluminium can. This image also showed that 'ALCOHOLICS' did, in fact, have the storage lockers on the engine deck.

The antenna base came from the Achilles kit and it was mounted on a plastic disc I made with a paper punch and a scrap of thin plastic sheet. The driver and co-driver's hatches were improved by adding periscopes from the Achilles kit and brush guards from the M32 kit. The exterior grab handles were replaced with floral wire and I used thin copper wire to make the hatch springs. On the inside of the hatches, I added protective head pads from Milliput epoxy putty. The headlights and their brush guards came from the Dragon kit, even though I had promised myself earlier to use photo-etched replacements! I added headlight plug holder tubes to them using bits of plastic rod. Just as in my reference photos, I excluded the hull machine gun and drilled out the armoured ball mount. The front fender stiffeners were also made from plastic rod and the step between the hatches was made with a short piece of plastic 'angle iron'. The lifting cable safety connection on the left side of the hull and the mechanic's vice bracket on the right front fender were made from plastic scrap.

Adding the boom

At this point, I started adding the ARV components from the M32 kit to the hull. I cleaned up the mould lines on the jib boom with my hobby knife and surprisingly enough, I didn't break off any of the delicate step rungs. I added the boom support cable, which runs from the rear of the right side boom strut to the lifting arm, from six pounds monofilament fishing line. I snapped the pivot ends of the boom into the pivot



My improved chock blocks from the M32 kit. I added brackets made from aluminium can, with locking rods and snatch block hook mounts from plastic tubing.

brackets and added the 'A' frame assembly to the rear of the boom. There is a prominent weld seam that appears on each 'A' frame leg and these were replicated with .015in plastic rod, with texture added, as explained earlier.

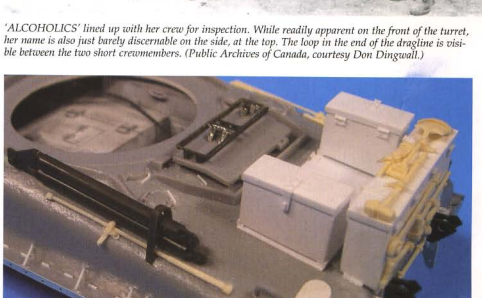
With the turret temporarily set in place on the hull and the 'A' frame seated in its sockets on the rear of the hull, I was able to determine where the boom brackets should be mounted on the sides of the upper hull. This was essential to ensure that the assembly was level and didn't interfere with the turret. After gluing the pivot brackets in place, I added weld seam detail to them. I knew that I'd be repeatedly adding and removing the boom to test fit various features so I filed off the round tabs on the pivot ends of the boom so it wouldn't eventually break the brackets. Finally, I used a length of nylon kite flying cord to make the lifting cable, and made the cable sockets from plastic scrap and aluminium from a drinks can. The completed lifting cable was then attached to the lifting arm on the boom.

'ALCOHOLICS' didn't have an 81 mm mortar mounted on the front of her hull, but she did retain the base plate and bipod brackets, so I added those parts. The three-roller fairlead, used when paying out the dragline cable, fit the Dragon hull with only a little bit of persuasion, as did the front pintle mount. I left the pintle hook off the front mount, as appears in one of my reference photos. Both snatch blocks provided in the M32 kit were loosely slung on the hull, hanging from the headlight brush guards. The hold-out bar, employed in towing a vehicle, aren't evident on 'ALCOHOLICS', but as with the turret mounted .50 calibre machine gun, I decided to add it stowed as shown in the M32 manual, and as it appears on an American M32B1 photographed near Bastogne in 'U.S. Armored Funnies'.

On the rear of the hull, I glued the spare road wheel bracket to the armoured air inlet cover and installed the tow bar and its mounting bracket to the left side of the hull. The rear lights came from the M4A1 kit and their brush guards are photo-etched replacements. The rear pintle hook in the 'Albin F. Drzyk' kit is far superior to its M32 counterpart so I glued it to the Italeri rear pintle mount, and added the assembly to the rear of the hull.

The holdout bar brackets on the rear of the hull were made from bits of plastic, and the tools are from Formations. The boom swing cable was made with nylon kite flying cord and threaded through the 'A' frame. It was then connected to the rear hull lifting rings with clamps made from pieces of aluminium can. I cut the swing cable long enough to permit the boom to be displayed in the raised

'ALCOHOLICS' lined up with her crew for inspection. While readily apparent on the front of the turret, her name is also just barely discernable on the side, at the top. The loop in the end of the dragline is visible between the two short crewmembers. (Public Archives of Canada, courtesy Don Dingwall.)



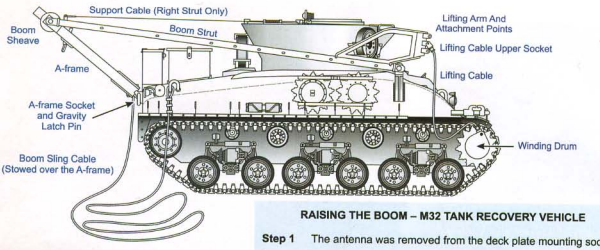
The engine deck, complete with Formations tools, locking bars on the armoured filler caps, 'A' frame sockets, spare road wheel stowage bracket on the air inlet armoured cover, tow bar and grouser compartment covers.

position, which also served to make the cable more realistic in appearance when stowed above the A-frame.

Stowed between the stowage lockers are the two chock blocks from the M32 kit. These were detailed with some hollow tubing together with brackets made from aluminium can. These incorporate locking rods made from plastic rod.

Wheels and tracks

The horizontal volute sprung suspension and 23-inch wide T80 steel chevron tracks are both supplied in the 'Albin F. Drzyk' kit. However, having built an earlier release of Dragon's M4A3E8, I knew full well that each track block had two recessed ejector pin marks on its face and eliminating them would be tiresome, and complicated by the raised chevron that figures prominently in this track design. The end connectors are also moulded on the ends of the track blocks so that they do not wrap around the sprockets and idler wheels in a convincing manner. With this in mind, I elected to use AFV Club's HVSS and T80 tracks, both of which are available as separate kits. (As I write this, Dragon Models Ltd has just released 'THUNDERBOLT VII', a state of the art M4A3E8, correcting the suspension issues from their earlier releases. Unfortunately, from the per-



How Did It Work?

RAISING THE BOOM – M32 TANK RECOVERY VEHICLE

Step 1 The antenna was removed from the deck plate mounting socket.

Step 2 The boom sling cable, attached to the rear lifting rings on the hull, was removed from its stowed position and laid out so that it could pay out freely as the boom elevated.

Step 3 The upper socket of the lifting cable was attached to one of three connections on the boom lifting arm. The top connection was used when elevating the boom with the TRV on an upward slope, the middle point for level ground, and the bottom connection when on a downward slope.

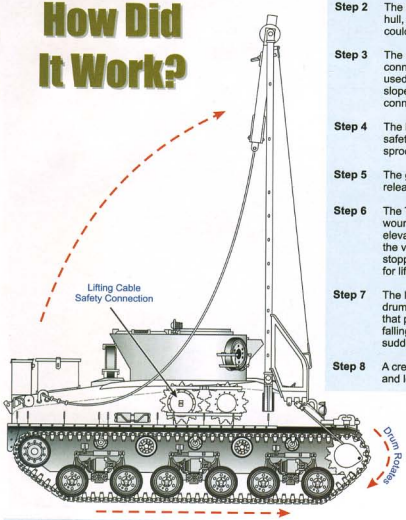
Step 4 The lower socket of the lifting cable was detached from the safety connection on the side of the hull and connected to the sprocket winding drum.

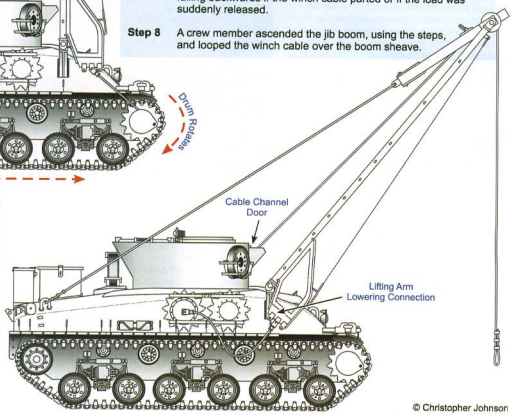
Step 5 The gravity latch pins were removed from the A-frame sockets, releasing the A-frame.

Step 6 The TRV was driven forward slowly and as the lifting cable wound around the lifting drum, the jib boom and A-frame elevated as a single unit. When the boom passed just forward of the vertical position, it fell ahead until the boom sling cable stopped its fall. The boom sling cable held the boom in position for lifts.

Step 7 The lower lifting cable socket was detached from the winding drum and secured to the safety connection on the hull side. In that position, it prevented the boom from snapping back and falling backwards if the winch cable parted or if the load was suddenly released.

Step 8 A crew member ascended the jib boom, using the steps, and looped the winch cable over the boom sheave.





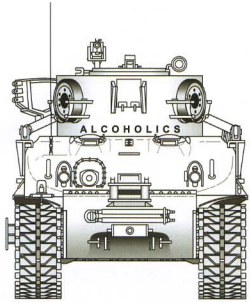
LOWERING THE BOOM

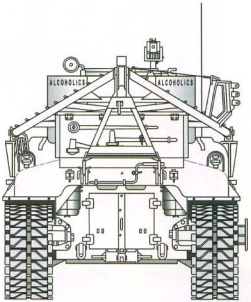
To lower the boom, the lifting cable upper socket was connected to the lowering connection on the lifting arm, while the lower socket was connected to the winding drum. The TRV was driven forward slowly and as the lifting cable wound around the winding drum, the jib boom was pulled to a vertical position. At that point, the TRV was shifted into reverse and driven backwards slowly. As the lifting cable unwound from the winding drum, the cable remained taut and the boom and A-frame assembly were slowly lowered to their stowed position.

© Christopher Johnson

M32A1B1 – ALCOHOLICS
Tank Recovery Vehicle

TECHNICAL TROOP
'A' SQUADRON
LORD STRATHCONA'S HORSE
(ROYAL CANADIANS)
KOREA, 1953



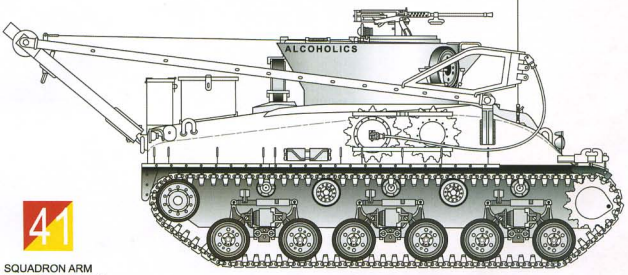


CANADA

25 CANADIAN
INFANTRY BRIGADE

1:48 Scale

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Feet
0 1 2 3 Metres



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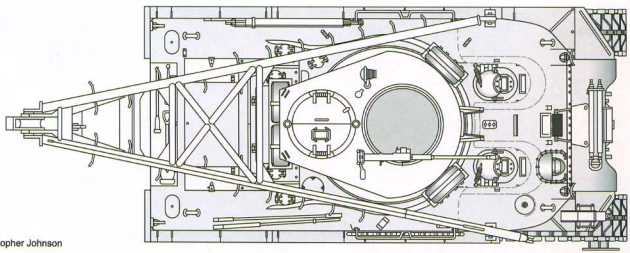
SQUADRON ARM
OF SERVICE MARKING



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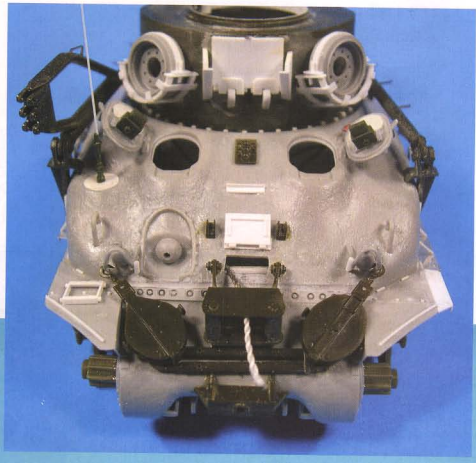


'ALCOHOLICS' begins to take shape. Repetitive test fitting is a must when engaged in a project that combines components from a number of different kits to ensure that there are no surprises at the end.

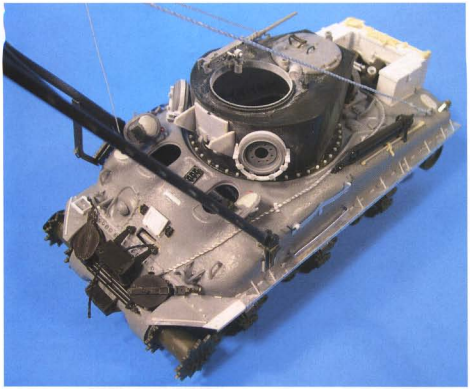
spective of a Korean War Canadian M4A3E8 project, it doesn't include T80 tracks.)

While finicky to assemble, the HVSS components went together well and were glued into place on the lower hull. The AFV Club idler wheels have detail on their inner faces, and although there are two raised knockout marks on the inside surface, once the two wheels are glued together, they aren't visible. The only addition I made to the suspension was to glue the winding drum from the M32 kit to the right side drive sprocket.

Painting and marking

'ALCOHOLICS' appeared to be virtually bereft of personal stowage. I think this was probably because the squadron operated in emplaced positions for the most part, so their crews had no need of stowing their personal equipment on the vehicle. Following suit, I left my model almost 'bare bones' too. With construction essentially completed, I primed the model with Krylon and then applied the base coat of paint. I used Tamiya's Olive

The boom is fully elevated. The swing cable is threaded through the 'A' frame and it holds the boom in position. The lifting cable, connected to the safety connection on the hull, prevented the boom from snapping backwards.



All the model needs at this point is a coat of paint, her road wheels and some tracks. The AFV Club drive sprockets are the early style without channels for the centre guide teeth.

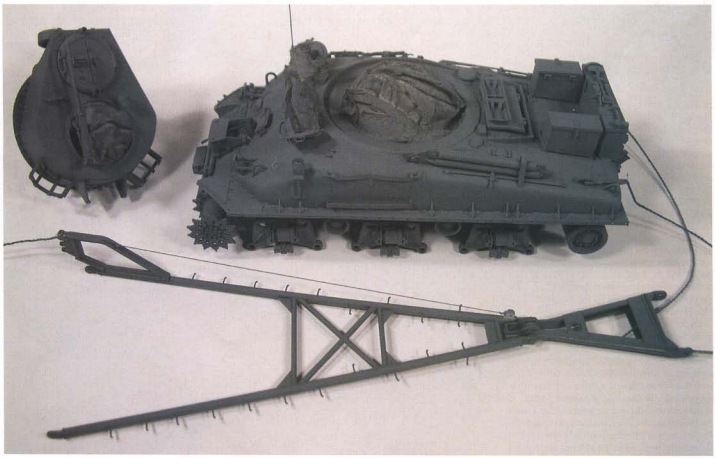
Drab XF62 lightened with Desert Yellow XF69. I then added more Desert Yellow to the mix and applied it to raised areas and sharp edges to add contrast to the base coat. At this point I painted the detail parts such as the tools, rubber road wheel tyres, headlights, taillights and the machine gun, finally spraying the model with a coat of Krylon clear matt in preparation for the markings.

There were few markings visible on 'ALCOHOLICS' and I only needed to add her name across the lower front face of the turret and just below the upper edges of the side plates. A colour image of 'BRONCO', a Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) 'B' Squadron M4A3E8, shows the name painted yellow, and I wrestled with the problem of how to reproduce 'ALCOHOLICS' in similar fashion. I checked the Internet for 'dry transfers' and happened across a graphic artist's Website in Vancouver who supplies custom made dry transfers for a reasonable price. Using Adobe Illustrator, I made up a 5in x 3in sheet of Korean War Canadian tank names in yellow (for future projects) and e-mailed the file to him. Within a week, I had the sheet in hand. I decided to make the transfers into decals for ease of use as I find working with transfers in confined spaces somewhat of a chore. I rubbed them onto a clear decal sheet, applied a sealer coat of Krylon clear matt spray and applied them to the turret. I sealed them in place with another coat of clear matte and I was extremely pleased with the end result. With the markings out of the way, the last task was to assemble the tracks.

Tracks links totalling 768 pieces!

Individual link tracks are tedious to assemble but I had little leeway in this project. The only other option I had was to use the single length T80 tracks from an Academy M51 kit, but I decided not to be lazy at this point and build the AFV Club set. Mind you, faced with 768 pieces in total, I was sorely tempted!

I spread the preparation of the track parts out over a period of time as it is deadly boring work. The major work involved removing the two knockout mould release pin marks on the inner faces of each track block, but as these stand proud of the surface, they're relatively easy to remove with a file.



The primer coat has been applied after masking the interior with tissue paper. The boom support cable, made from clear monofilament fishing line is now visible.

The base coat of paint has been applied, followed by a lighter shade of the same colour, to highlight the raised areas. The dry transfers, which I made into decals, add some much-needed colour to an otherwise drab finish.

Once all of the pieces were cleaned up I set aside a Saturday to assemble them. While AFV Club may advertise them as workable, I found that it would be best to glue them together as the end connectors slipped maddeningly off the track block pins when assembled dry.

I assemble my tracks differently than most in that I construct one track run from start to finish, as opposed to the link and length methodology. The downfall of my procedure is that with a complicated set such as these, it requires an uninterrupted day, so plan ahead if you decide to try it for yourself.

I first applied a drop of slow setting Tamiya cement to two end connector pins on one track block, slid the centre guide tooth into position and then connected a second track block to the first with two end connectors. I repeated the process until the full run was completed. Pausing several minutes to regain my sanity, I airbrushed the inner face of the track run with Tamiya Flat Black XF1 to represent the rubber block construction. The outer face and end connectors were airbrushed with Tamiya Gun Metal X10. Acrylic paint dries rapidly and within a matter of minutes, I formed the still flexible track run around the suspension. I removed several extra track blocks to arrive at the correct length and fastened the ends together with two end connectors. I repeated this procedure for the other track run and by the time I had finished both runs, my Saturday was spent.

With the exception of the tracks, I applied multiple pin washes of dirty black and dark brown oil paints, mixed with mineral spirits. The tracks received similar washes, but these were made with Tamiya acrylics mixed with their thinner as mineral spirits have an unpleasant tendency to dissolve unpainted plastic, such as may occur with end connector pins. I used the brown acrylic wash on the upper surface of the jib boom to provide contrast between it and the vehicle itself. After the washes were dry, I dry-brushed the model with various shades of Humbrol enamels to highlight the raised detail.

Finally assembled

In the final assembly, I pulled the dragline through its open door, cut it to length and fashioned a loop on the end with clamps made from aluminium can. The turret was set in place using two holes drilled in the hull top and corresponding locating pins on the bottom of the turret to secure it in place.

The spare wheels on the rear of the turret were jockeyed into the bracket on the armoured air inlet cover. The pivot points of the jib boom were placed in their brackets and the 'A' frame secured in place with the gravity latch pins. I folded the swing cable in its stowed position on the 'A' frame and attached the lifting cable to the safety connection on the right side of the hull. Finally, to add a bit more colour to the model, I added a canvas tarp hanging over the turret side, which the crew may well have used to cover the machine gun ring during inclement weather. This was made from tissues soaked in a white glue and water mixture and then painted with Tamiya acrylics. Call me old fashioned, but I still think this old style methodology makes realistic looking canvas tarps.

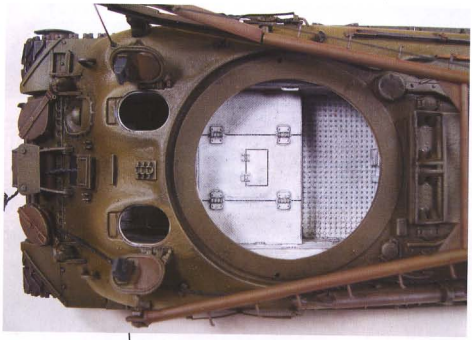
With grateful thanks to ...

This was indeed, an enjoyable project from start to finish, made possible by Don Dingwall and Jason Bobrowich, each of whom shared images of 'ALCOHOLICS' from their collections. As always, Bob Wiber suffered through endless e-mail updates and provided critical comment throughout the course of the build.

Kits and Accessories

Italeri Recovery Vehicle M32, Kit 203.
Dragon Models M4A1 75 mm - Kit, 6048.
Dragon Models 'Albin F. Drzyk' M4A3E8, Kit 6283.
Academy Achilles, Kit 1392.
AFV Club M4 Sherman Medium Tank Horizontal Volute Sprung Suspension, Kit AF35030. M4 Sherman HVSS T80 Track, Kit AF35032.
Custom dry transfer 'ALCOHOLICS' markings from All-out Graphics: http://www.allout-graphics.com/

The AFV Club T80 tracks have been installed and given a base coat of Tamiya Gun Metal X10.



With the jib boom in place, all that remains to do is attach the fixed turret. I drilled two holes on opposite sides of the turret opening for corresponding pins on the underside of the turret flange, which makes for perfect turret alignment.

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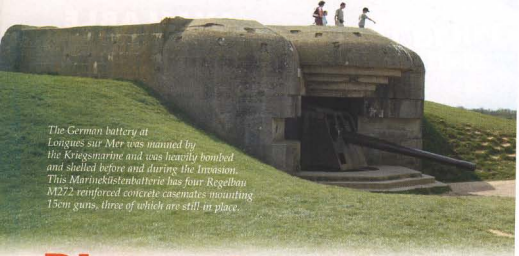


The German battery at Longues sur Mer was manned by the Kriegsmarine and was heavily bombed and shelled before and during the Invasion. This Marinegistanduterie has four Regelbau M272 reinforced concrete casemates mounting 15cm guns, three of which are still in place.

Diary of a Journey

In part 3 Robin Buckland continues his travels in Normandy and visits the German gun battery at Longues sur Mer and the site where the US 2nd Ranger Battalion stormed the heights of Pointe du Hoc on D-Day

Having been up to the Hillman strongpoint, it was an impressive sight to look down from the Perriers ridge, and see just how it commanded the view of the beaches and immediate inland areas.

On day one it had been interesting to see the battery at Merville, but further along the coast lies the site of Longues sur Mer. This gun battery was built on the coast, and there are four large casemates, and all with the guns still there. In the first casemate the gun has been destroyed, but parts of the barrel remain part buried in the soil immediately in front of the position. The other three casemates, although damaged, remain largely intact, and their guns and gun shields remain in place. Each one is in slightly different condition, and the fourth one you come to is, perhaps, best with part of the crew platform still attached, though all is heavily rusted. Inside the rear of the casemates are the ammunition storerooms, and set behind this line of impressive emplacements, the accommodation and ammunition bunkers remain, sunk down to ground level. Walking forward from the position, you will see a couple of Tobruk emplacements, but now sitting amidst cultivated fields! Right up at the cliff's edge you'll find the superbly preserved observation bunker.

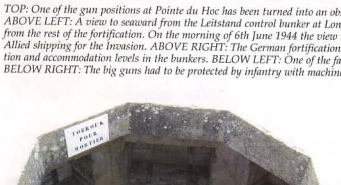
ABOVE: The ingenious design of the German M272 casemate is evident in this view of two of the guns at Longues sur Mer. The battery fought 'duels' with Allied naval units and the direct hits that didn't penetrate are evident on the casemate's roof. Allied gunfire was very accurate because it was radar predicted, evidenced by the 'direct' hits from plunging fire on their roofs. BELOW: Pointe du Hoc where the US 2nd Ranger Battalion stormed the cliffs on the morning of 6th June 1944. The Rangers Memorial to Lieutenant Colonel James E. Rudder and his 225 Rangers is sited on the top of the cliff.

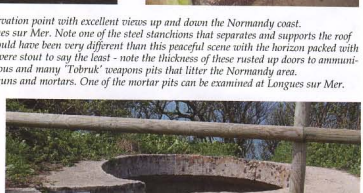
Three of the casemates at Longues sur Mer viewed from seaward.

ABOVE: The guns at Longues sur Mer are 15cm Torpedobootskanone C/36 (15cm TbtsK C/36) with a range of 19,525 metres. Their calibre is 149.1mm. (5.9 inch) with a barrel length of 6,772mm. Note how the nickel in the welds on the gun shields shines through the rusted parts over sixty years after their manufacture. BELOW LEFT: The port that gave access from the rear of the casemate to the gun platform in one of sites at Longues sur Mer. BELOW RIGHT: An internal AA ammunition explosion destroyed one of the casemates at Longues sur Mer after the invasion destroying the gun - this is part of the gun's training mechanism destroyed in the blast.

Take the path down and have a look inside. It is stark and empty today but the thick concrete emplacement makes an impressive site. It is also possible to climb up the steel rungs of the external ladder to find yourself in the upper observation platform. The roof of the massive concrete slab that provides overhead protection stands on metal supports, and the roof is hollowed out to give headroom. A side opening lets you out and this remains open and is a natural draw to children. However, the potential for a fall made me shudder somewhat. Had we been in the UK, I suspect it would have been sealed off, if we had been allowed up in the first place on the grounds of Health & Safety. I found myself caught between feelings of relief that we are able to get a proper look at these relics though another part of me said there was no way I'd allow my children out on the edge!

TOP: One of the gun positions at Pointe du Hoc has been turned into an observation point with excellent views up and down the Normandy coast. ABOVE LEFT: A view to seaward from the Leitstand control bunker at Longues sur Mer. Note one of the steel stanchions that separates and supports the roof from the rest of the fortification. On the morning of 6th June 1944 the view would have been very different than this peaceful scene with the horizon packed with Allied shipping for the invasion. ABOVE RIGHT: The German fortifications were stout to say the least - note the thickness of these rusted up doors to ammunition and accommodation levels in the bunkers. BELOW LEFT: One of the famous and many "Tobruk" weapons pits that litter the Normandy area. BELOW RIGHT: The big guns had to be protected by infantry with machine guns and mortars. One of the mortar pits can be examined at Longues sur Mer.





The view from the platform is superb, and you see how it would have been a threat had these guns been able to play havoc with the landing fleet. With clear signposting, a small visitor centre, car parking and toilets, you are able to walk around the whole site, though now free of barbed wire, trenches and protective belts of mines!

In contrast, further along the coast, you get to the Point du Hoc, a famous site where US Rangers stormed cliffs on D-Day, which has been left as a memorial. Subjected to heavy shelling and aerial bombing, it was a major event of the day. Again, a large car park and visitor centre, from where you walk into an area now preserved as the memorial. Even the path into the site twists and turns as it goes round the edge of huge bomb craters. When you enter the main area of the battery, it rather takes your breath away looking like nothing short of a moonscape. The whole area is just a mass of huge bomb and shell craters, many of which overlap. The fact that some of the concrete emplacements here are still intact, even if they are damaged, is nothing short of remarkable, and a testament to their solid construction. There is a mix of both open emplacements and casemates, along with Tobruk, accommodation, AA and command bunkers. As you walk in you will pass a Tobruk emplacement, alongside which is a massive crater that has exposed the side of the small bunker itself. Despite this the little bunker shows virtually no sign of damage, which is amazing, though I hate to think how it would have felt for anyone inside it when that bomb went off!

Sadly, the large AA position on the cliff edge, where the Ranger memorial is sited, is now fenced off as the cliff is unsafe. As you walk around you are confronted with the positions which are still largely intact, if damaged, some which are badly damaged, and fenced off as

TOP: You would need a lot of space in a diorama to model bomb craters 'in scale'. This one, at Pointe du Hoc, is one of the many on the Normandy coast made by Allied bombing or naval shellfire that were never filled in and lie overgrown with grass. ABOVE: One of the gun positions at Pointe du Hoc damaged by Allied action and apparently not as massively constructed as those at Longues sur Mer.

inaccessible, and those which are just a large crater filled at the bottom with chunks of concrete and bits of reinforcing rod, the whole thing reduced to a pile of rubble. Many of the large casemates and bunkers you can still look inside, though they are not lit and a torch is highly recommended accessory.

Looking along the cliff it is hard to imagine the feelings of the Rangers on that day, and the steep cliff that confronted them, knowing that enemy troops were above them, and able to simply lob grenades and mortar bombs over the edge. As a memorial, and having seen photos of the assault as well as aerial shots showing the bombing of the Pointe, walking around this memorial site I found to be one of the experiences that sits in the mind. I found it a very thought-provoking place to visit, and one that has to be recommended.

The way these batteries are preserved, as both memorials and undoubtedly as tourist attractions, they are places I would keep on my list of sites you must visit if you take a trip out to Normandy. ■

ABOVE RIGHT: One of the gun positions on Pointe du Hoc. Strangely it looks more like ancient Roman than 20th century German! BELOW LEFT: A good view of the Leitstand control bunker for the four gun positions of the Marineküstenbatterie at Longues sur Mer that is sited forward on the cliff edge. This bunker is externally in excellent condition for its age and it, or another similar one, 'starred' in the film 'The Longest Day'. BELOW: The US Ranger Memorial at Pointe du Hoc. The 2nd Battalion stormed the cliffs here, sustaining very heavy casualties, only to find when they took the heights that the guns had not been mounted into the positions.

'ATTEN-SHUN!'

New and recently released products reviewed

● The Editor welcomes product samples for review. Unless a prior arrangement has been made with the Editor review samples WILL NOT be returned. All product samples intended for review in the 'Atten-Shun!' column should be sent to:

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LU7 2FA

● Tel/fax: 01525 370389
● E-mail: editor@militarymodelling.com

Young Miniatures

The Korea-based manufacturer, Young Miniatures, has been busy this last month with not one, but two new kit releases.

Once again, Young has returned to a favourite theme, namely German WWII military busts and the latest iteration is a 1:10 scale bust of a German *Waffen SS* infantryman during the abortive Ardennes campaign of late 1944. It consists of eight beautifully cast resin parts and while there are some remains of the pouring gates, these are easily removed along with some faint mould lines. Then… the whole ensemble just slots together, no fuss, no filler required!

I especially liked the face; it has just the right amount of fanatical resolution allied to the tiredness of the universal infantryman. You will have to heat the lengths of machine gun belt to drape them realistically around the figure's neck. For those of you interested in busts and/or WWII German military, this model I can heartedly recommend. The face alone will give hours of enjoyment, but if you get it right there's a gold medal just waiting to be won. Young B. Song who, incidentally, also painted the box top example sculpted the bust. In regards to the box top photo, this is all the painting instruction there is for the bust and my only criticism. Manufacturers who take for granted that any purchaser has all the necessary reference are expecting a lot. A page of painting instructions never goes amiss, even a short historical 'blurb' *à la* Pegaso or Andrea is a definite plus. The German *Waffen SS*, Ardennes 1944 (Kit No: YM1804 YH9004) retails at £30.

The second offering from Young Miniatures is a 90mm white metal kit of a Highland Clansman of 1746 (YH9004). On opening the usual sturdy black box, one is confronted with a goodly amount of parts, but no painting instructions! With this kit, I would think that painting instructions were not just necessary but imperative. A picture, albeit a good one on the box, is not good enough. For example, what does the reverse look like?

As for the kit itself, apart from a little flash, I can find little to fault it. Not only is it beautifully sculpted by Young B. Seng, but also the casting is also first rate. The stance has the look of a belligerent Highlander who has triumphantly marched to Derby and is ready to take on the power of Prince William on the field of Culloden. Over his shoulder he carries a pole arm and he holds his broadsword by the baldric (the belt itself has to be cut from the length of supplied lead sheet). On my review sample the parts went together well and required no filler. The metal used is such that the halberd pole does not bend easily so I am inclined to leave it alone. In a number of cases, I have found that white metal bends so easily that it has been best to remove the 'sharp end' of a longer length and fix it to a length of brass rod. I particularly like this latest kit from Young Miniatures; it has just about everything (except instructions!) I look for in a figure. This is definitely one for the Christmas list! The Highland Clansman 1746 (Kit No: YH9004) retails at £47.

Young Miniatures are available from Historex Agents, Wellington House, 157 Snargate Street, Dover, Kent CT17 9BZ. Tel: 01304 206720. Fax: 01304 204528.
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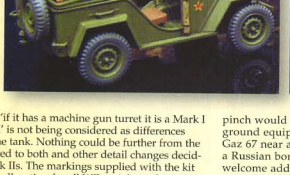
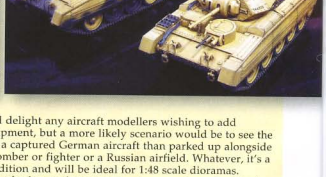
www.young-miniatures.com

Our friend in Japan sent these photos of the latest kit releases at a recent Tamiya show. Tamiya continue to add to their fast growing 1:48 scale series, with the British Crusader cruiser tank and the Russian Gaz 67 field car - the Soviet 'equivalent' of the American 'jeep'. The Crusader it seems will be produced in Mark I and Mark II versions and going by the photos, I hope the misconception of - 'if it has a machine gun turret it is a Mark I and if it hasn't it is a Mark II' is not being considered as differences between the two marks of the tank. Nothing could be further from the truth. The sub turret was fitted to both and other detail changes decided what were Crusader Mark IIs. The markings supplied with the kit will be interesting as precise allocation for all WD serials on Crusader I and II are not straightforward. Food for thought eh?





The little Gaz 67 fits in nicely with Tamiya's plans to include some appropriate soft skins in their 1:48 scale range and at a pinch would delight any aircraft modellers wishing to add ground equipment, but a more likely scenario would be to see the Gaz 67 near a captured German aircraft than parked up alongside a Russian bomber or fighter or a Russian airfield. Whatever, it's a welcome addition and will be ideal for 1:48 scale dioramas.

We'll report further on these models when samples arrive. Tamiya kits are imported into the UK by The Hobby Company Ltd., Garforth Place, Knoll Hill, Milton Keynes MK5 8PH. Tel: 01908 605686. Fax: 01908 605666. sales@hobbyco.net enquiries@hobbyco.net

Metal Modeles

Two new 54mm figure kits from that prolific French manufacturer, Metal Modeles, are a Napoleonic figure (Oh good, my favourite!) and a Belgian from The First World War; both are cast in white metal.

The first figure, a musician of the Grenadiers à Pied of the Imperial Guard (MM110) represents a first for Bruno Leibovitz, the sculptor and leading light of the company, in that he has also supplied an 'extra' in the form of a portion of wall as a prop for the character and I do not recall that Metal Modeles has ever done this previously. Anyway, our musician leans nonchalantly against the wall with his right hand resting on the serpent instrument. I must admit I do like this more relaxed pose and I hope this will not be the last. It goes without saying that the figure is colourful, he is, after all, from the most colourful period in history for military uniforms. As usual with this French firm, it is hard to find fault either in the sculpting or the casting, and this is no exception. For those of you already collecting this series I can but say that you are in for a treat. Go out and buy it!

Now for the next one, an unusual choice is the Belgian Guide of 1915 (MMGG22) and I also like this figure. He looks suitably imposing, wearing his large green cape/overcoat over a matching green tunic piped red; red trousers with false boot tops and sporting a busby. A nice touch is the bandaged right eye giving the character a raffish appearance. The kit consists of the complete body, head, left hand, sword and sword knot, a strip of foil for the sword slings and, of course, Metal Modeles' usual square base. The mould lines are easily cleaned up and, in fact, I was priming ready for painting within a half hour of opening the plastic bag. If you are a WWI fan, this is definitely one for you.

The musician (MM110) retails at £17:95 and the Belgian Guide (MMGG22) at £15:45. Both, plus postage, are obtainable from Historex Agents, Wellington House, 157 Snargate Street, Dover, Kent CT17 9BZ.

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Metal Modeles, BP 66 La Quênière, Route de Mons, 83440 Fayence, France.

Seil Models

Seil, the Korea-based kit manufacturer has released two 54mm white metal figure kits. The first is a late17th century French Musketeer (SH54043), sculpted by Yury Serevrykov. On opening the sturdy black box the first thing I discovered was a photo-etched brass nameplate, complete with four brass oval-headed pins to fix it, but more of that later.

The kit itself is a little gem, so finely sculpted and cast. Yes, there was a little flash and some mould lines to remove, but that was easily accomplished. The fit of the individual parts was nigh on perfect. A nice touch is the individually cast cartridges, commonly called 'The Twelve Apostles', that hung from the bandolier, although, in this case, there isn't 12 of them! That said, there are over 12 marked holes on the bandolier. Our musketeer is a fierce looking chap, although handsome with his moustaches and goatee. He is also, when painted, very colourful so would be a welcome addition in any display cabinet. The painting instructions consist of a colour sheet showing two views, front and rear, of the completed figure. I can't say that I needed any more!

The second of Seil's new additions to its range is a 10th century Viking with axe (SH54044), also sculpted by Yury Serevrykov and also has an etched brass nameplate. It is a much simpler figure than the previous one, consisting of merely four separate parts plus a base. Once again, there was no problem with the fit and the sculpting of the chain mail is absolutely faultless, In fact, I don't recall having seen better on a 90mm figure for some time. The painting instructions are,

once again, on a single sheet, but this time showing views from four different angles. I recommend both of these figures without any reservations.

Now for the small drawback, the nameplates! I cannot fault the idea (other manufacturers please note!) but the titles etched on them, oh dear, oh dear! Who, in English, would put Viking with Axe (10th Century A.D.) or French Musketeer (Late of 17th Century A.D.) ...? Certainly not me! 'Viking, 10th Century' or 'French Musketeer, Late 17th Century', maybe. I'm sure that there are many English speakers in Korea that Seil could approach so that the English is correct, it would take about two minutes. Still, it does not detract from the figures themselves, I think I shall just engrave the names on the backs of the brass plates instead.

Seil Model's figure kits are available in the UK from Historex Agents, Wellington House, 157 Snargate Street, Dover, Kent CT17 9BZ. Tel: 01304 206720.
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Dragon Models Ltd

Close behind their kit 6062 'M4A2 Tarawa' reviewed in Vol.36 No.13 comes another small-hatch, diesel engine Sherman kit 6313 and this one is listed under its British designation of Mark III. While not as numerous as over 7,000 M4A4 Sherman V, around 5,000 M4A2 75mm were supplied under Lend-Lease for Commonwealth service, which closely matches the sum of all M4 Sherman I with 75mm or 105mm added to all the M4A1 Sherman II 75mm and 76mm. Another 2,000 in Russian hands and maybe over 300 with the Free French will make these two kits popular subjects with modellers.

M4A2 like all Shermans went through several changes in design, which affected their appearance. As would be expected the contents of this kit are similar to the Tarawa version with some extras and changes and one omission. Compared to kit 6062 it includes a set of spoked roadwheels and idlers to be used in place of the pressed steel type, leaving these and a set of bogie units with attached upswept return rollers for the spares box. The turret is the same and provides an M34A1 with wide gun mantlet, though here it also comes with new parts for the M34 pattern with its narrow rotor in two styles, with and without the two small side wings to protect the entry point of the main gun barrel. Oddly for a British vehicle, the cage protecting the No 19 radio set's B aerial is not provided though the base for the A set is given as well as an American equivalent.

The upper hull is slightly different as it depicts the cast style of bulges for driver and co-driver and glacis aerial mounting base in place of the welded and rounded styles of the Tarawa kit. The transmission cover or 'nose' is a three-piece type, parts for which come on their own small sprue and there is another with two parts for the stowage bin on the back of the turret which is the type widely used in the Mediterranean theatre. Also different are the etched brass parts; this is more extensive as it includes sandshields and the mountings for the 'Sunshade' lorry camouflage.

Other parts are as in earlier kit and are to the same high standard. Tracks are T54E1 pattern steel chevron tracks in 'glue-able', tan-coloured soft plastic format. Early issues of kit 6062 packed these so the teeth were bent in transit, but here they shipped flat in their own separate plastic bag. With almost no track sag on Shermans this is a much easier option than three-part individual link tracks as seen on earlier kits. Weld seams on the upper hull are raised and not the channels seen in so many kits, though despite the use of slide moulds the bolts on the rear of the hull have to be added from the brass fret using painted-on locating marks as a guide and the weld seams between the various sections which made up the glacis are missing as they also are on the Tarawa version. Items containing glass such as periscopes and lights come as clear plastic items. Gun barrels are moulded with hollow muzzles. Crew hatches and covers over the engine are separate, but no interior parts for engine or fighting areas are included. Fuel filler caps are separate with the fillers underneath them for added detail. There is also a steel wire tow cable.

The kit is designed to depict three tanks of the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry in Syria in late 1943. Regular readers will have seen the articles in *MM* Vol.35 No.9 on modelling their command tank with a background feature giving details of several of their other vehicles and even a photo of one of the kit options. As opinions vary on the colours used, kit instructions give options for either grey or red-brown over the base 'sand'. To accurately model these there are minor variations which the instructions cover; note also that CORSTON carried an M2 .50 Calibre Browning machine gun on the cupola mounting, and THE OLD BELL had an M1919A4 .30 Cal, neither of which are included in the kit, while BARFORD ST MARTIN had the simpler style of antenna mount on the glacis. An etched rack for POW containers on the front mudguard is provided but there is nothing to go in them.

Decals are also not totally accurate. The green shade on the arm of service marking is too dark, while the style of characters for the serial numbers does not match the stencilled form seen on photos of Wiltshire Yeomanry tanks. Luckily there is an excellent set of decals already available from Singapore-based Echelon Fine Details. Their 1:35 scale Decal Sheet No. ALT352002 'Markings for Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry in Syria (1943)' could have been designed for this kit - although I have my suspicions that in reality it was the other way round! The set was reviewed in *MM* Vol.35 No 15 and is available direct online or through several dealers worldwide. It offers markings for other Sherman III, these will need suitable detail changes which the decal instructions list.

Otherwise, with the style of stowage bin and other fittings, the kit would be suitable as a tank in Sicily or Italy in various hands. Several references are available for Canadian, New Zealand, South African and Polish vehicles as well as some British options, and looking around there are, or at least were, decals for some of these as well plus more on Russian and French subjects. Watch the details though, not only for which type of track was fitted, but also wheels, suspension bogies, noses, turret fittings, stowage bins (a square style was used in NW Europe) driver's hoods and aerial mountings which may need some conversion work, cross-kitting or use of aftermarket items.

Looking at this kit and the M4A2 Tarawa, this may be the more adaptable edition with more options such as different mantlet and wheels. The only major item missing is the one-piece nose, which is in the Tarawa version, the unwanted nose on Sprue 'A' would need a lot of work to match it. In the end the driver/co-driver hood styles may determine which is best for a specific project. Neither kit offers a hull with the direct vision ports, this could be modelled with a little effort from either version and, with luck, we might get one from Dragon. Maybe even with accurate early-style bogies with top mounted return rollers though I would stress that this is only my own hope and no such kit is listed as this is written. But then good luck is supposed to come in threes!

More extensive conversions are also possible. A small number of Sherman III became ARVs and some were rebuilt as DD amphibians, this kit has parts for the basic vehicle for the Sherman III DDII at the Tank Museum, though adding the floatation gear would not be an easy task. Still... Or maybe a post-war one with turret from an AMX13 in Egyptian service?

Dragon Models are imported into the UK by The Hobby Company Ltd., Garforth Place, Knoll Hill, Milton Keynes MK5 8PH. Tel: 01908 605686. Fax: 01908 605666. sales@hobbyco.net enquiries@hobbyco.net

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Price £29.99

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Accurate Armour's new full colour 'Catalogue No.3' is now available price £9.99 including postage. The 64-page catalogue, including covers, also contains a CD ROM with a complete price list and order form of Accurate Armour products. To open the files on the CD you will need to have Adobe Reader installed - if you don't have it you can download it free from www.adobe.com The catalogue is packed with photos of the Accurate Armour range and when you look at what they've produced coming up to their 20 years in business it's quite mind-boggling. We all know that 'resin kits are expensive' but you get what you pay for and Accurate Armour's kits are very good quality and the range is constantly being updated and older kits improved to current standards. All serious military vehicle modellers should have one of these to hand ...Get your copy now from, Accurate Armour Ltd., Units 13-16 Kingston Industrial Estate, Port Glasgow, Inverclyde, Scotland PA14 5DG. Tel: 01475 743955. Fax: 01475 743746. www.accurate-armour.com

Legend

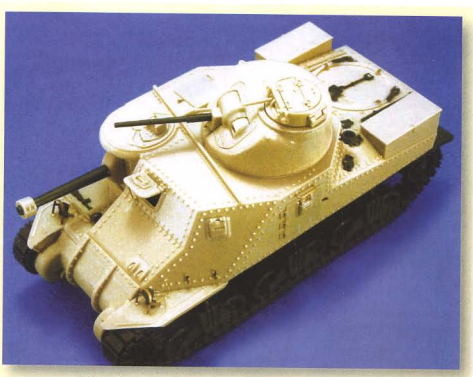
When Academy released their 1:35 scale U.S. Medium Tank M3 Lee (kit 1320) there were some comments and complaints about accuracy issues. These included the shape of the turret with a prominent bulge under the cupola, the angle of the main hull side plate on the left-hand side and the bogie units not being the correct proportions. Of these, the turret issue was addressed by Steve Zaloga in his article in ***Military Modelling*** Vol.36 No.9 where he presented his research on two different styles of casting used by different manufacturers and also came up with a solution for the bogie units. For the hull correction, replacing one side would mean rebuilding the front fighting compartment.

Legend's set (LF1133) corrects both hull and turret issues and as such replaces most of the Academy kit above the level of the tracks. In fact, some might say that the plastic kit becomes a source of detailing parts for the resin items! However you look at it, this is what you get. Most parts are in cream resin by the way with a few metal details as will be pointed out henceforth.

Starting at the top, there is a new turret of ASF or Continental pattern with the less pronounced bulge under the cupola. This comprises the main shell with side pistol port moulded solid, commander's cupola with separate hatches and machine gun barrel, main gun mounting with separate rotor, sight opening and coaxial machine gun barrel. All that is needed from Academy is the 37mm barrel itself and some may prefer to use a turned metal item from another source. The smaller parts come attached to a casting block which can easily be removed, but the turret shell is attached to its block by three large connecting blocks around 6mm by 4mm which will need care to take off both to prevent damage to the part or the modeller as well as the usual possible problems with dust.

The upper hull comes as a single large part, which is solidly square on my example and clicked straight into place on the kit lower hull. There is a large casting block on the front similar to the turret, thin skins of resin cover the side and top hatch openings and driver's visor with more substantial items which need to be removed to open the hull gun mounting and the turret ring. A deep indentation is provided under the small port to the driver's left side though opening it up will need some work while the rear-facing port is moulded in place. Mesh over the intake on the engine deck is also a solid item, anyone wishing to open that area up will need to resort to drills and files. The gunsight head is separate, so it can be positioned to follow the angle of traverse of the barrel, main gun mounting, side and top hatches and the separate ports come as separate resin items, mudguards are separate resin items with large blocks to be removed. A brief check with the firewall between engine and fighting compartment shows some trimming will be needed to use the plastic kit's interior parts.

Outside, new larger stowage boxes for the hull top are given and will need some rivets removing to fit them though not all tanks had them fitted. Smaller details such as tools (apart from the axe and pickaxe handle), headlights and gun barrels need to come from the plastic kit though there is a counterweight for the barrel in resin. Resin



parts are provided for the upper and lower rear hull plates along with the large air cleaner units complete with neat moulded-on details and exhaust fishtails though access doors, rear lights and towing shackle attachments need to come from the plastic kit. At the hull front a large casting is provided for the three-piece transmission cover or 'nose'. This has a large carrier block which needs to be cut and carved away. To fit it in place the forward section of the plastic lower hull tub has to be cut off. The kit instructions provide clear dimensions and directions for this.

All the resin parts are cleanly cast with good surface detail including cast texture and casting numbers, there were no obvious bubbles in my example. Apart from removing the carrier blocks and some thin flash, all I could see to be corrected was to straighten the pick-axe handle. Hatch flaps are detailed inside as well as out, a very small brass fret gives parts for the clasps for the side hatches and headlight guards which will be tricky to assemble as they come in three parts. Brass rod is provided for handles over the side hatches and thin string for towrope to go with the eyes from plastic kit parts. Several rivets are also provided on resin blocks, which can be used as required.

Instructions are in the form of a single-side A4 sheet with colour photos of the parts for identification and of a built-up model with resin, metal and plastic parts pointed out. No details of colour scheme or markings are provided, so references will have to be checked for these. Details of specific vehicles will need to be watched as well as there were minor differences in air cleaners and exhausts and even turret pattern between vehicles.

Much of the basic plastic kit is not required which some might see as wasteful yet one is need to supply several small parts. However the main improvement is correcting the hull shape and supplying it as a complete unit will reduce fit problems between resin and plastic parts. A different turret style is included as well as the stowage boxes, but the set does not do anything to fix the suspension bogies. For those who do not want to go to the trouble of correcting the hull, turret and stowage bins are available separately as set LF1132 'M3 Lee ALCO Turret and Stowage Bin Set'. Correcting the hull and turret but not the suspension would appear to be spoiling the overall effect, but there are solutions for this ranging from the method in the article mentioned above or a separate aftermarket set. Adding one of these will mean little of the basic kit is left, but the end result should be a more accurate model.

The review sample was kindly supplied by UK importers Friendship Models, 12 Delta Drive, Musselburgh, East Lothian, Scotland EH21 8HR. Tel: 0131 665 4087 friendshipmodels@btinternet.com www.friendshipmodels.com They have the full M3 Lee Detailing Set LF1133 at £24.99 and the separate turret set LF1132 at £12.99 plus relevant postage and packing.

Peter Brown

Prices in text

Legend Productions, Military Miniature Model, 16-55, 1F, Hwaseo-Dong, Changan-Gu, Suwon-Si, Kyoungki-Do, Korea. Tel: 82-31-255-2629. Fax: 32-31-246-2629. legend@www-legend.co.kr www.www-legend.co.kr

It's a fact!

A recent survey of their top 100 stores by newsagents WH Smith revealed that their store in Leeds sells the most copies of *Military Modelling* in the United Kingdom... That's interesting news. Well done Leeds!

Dragon Models Ltd

This is the first new kit of this vehicle in 30 years that provides details for early or late model vehicles, as well as for different armament options. It has brilliantly designed track and bogie assembly captures look of the original. I had the privilege to see the test shot ('Beta' version) of Dragon's 1:35 scale M2A1 (kit no. 6329) sent to Steve Zaloga, and had the advantage of his comments on the kit before I even saw a review sample.

After several years of heavy prodding by people like myself, DML has now turned its attention to the American halftracks of WWII. The first of what promises to be a healthy series is a two-in-one kit that permits the modeller to either build the early war M2 or the late war M2A1 from a single kit.

For those people not familiar with the M2 series halftracks, they were nearly identical to the better-known M3 series used by the armoured infantry units in armoured divisions but were special purpose vehicles that were designed for use by other elements. Two of the major users of this version were armoured engineers and anti-tank artillery battalions. To that end, the M2 had two large stowage bins, one on each side of the hull behind the 'cab' of the vehicle, and special racks as needed inside for stowage of essential items. The M2 later received add-on accessories such as jerrycan racks for water or fuel and racks for mines on the sides of the body.

The major difference between the M2 and M2A1 was the replacement of the weapons' mounting system inside the hull, better known as a 'skate' rail, with multiple machine gun mounts sliding on it, with a more practical M49 ring mount above the co-driver/commander's position on the right side of the 'cab.'

Other variations were incremental and could be found on either M2 or M2A1 vehicles, more so as many M2s were rebuilt in the field into M2A1s with the skate rail removed and the M49 mounted instead. The three main optional features were: either a roller or a winch, of which the roller was far more common on M2 series vehicles; automotive style headlights mounted on the tops of the fenders, or 'combat' headlights mounted on the sides of the armoured grille; and stowage racks at the rear of the hull and mine racks, which were MWO (modification work order) items added in the field.

DML has managed to cover the gamut of items and provides most of them here in one package, and as a 'Smart Kit' with really amazing details as well. Four sprues provide the parts for the chassis and drive train, including a complete White engine and transmission. While the hood is moulded in one piece, DML has notched the backside as well as the insides of the 'cab' sides to permit easy cutting to open them up for display. The steering does not operate (no big loss of oversized parts) but is very petite and neatly detailed.

The bogies and track runs are very impressive, as the idlers and drivers are 'slide moulded' with respectively thin details and openings. (Some 'boo birds' have already complained they are too thick, but I invite them to compare them to the Tamiya offerings first and then ask if they really want to solder the parts together from etched brass!) Each bogie assembly consists of 18 parts and is very petite; the mounting suspension provides five more with the track tension adjusters nicely portrayed. The tracks are very interesting: DML moulded them in hard styrene plastic in two halves, cut in such a way that the 'chain' plate drive tooth guides in the centre are represented as they are found on the actual vehicle. Since the tracks were metal with rubber 'endless belt' casings vulcanized onto them, this is a neat way to portray it. (Steve answered one of my questions in that they do fit on fairly easily, as they are installed at the same time as the drivers and idlers so the entire assembly can be snugly fitted to the model. See the next issue for an article by Steve on building this new kit.

The model comes with two sets of body panels for the rear body - one with the mounts for the skate ring and one without, based on which one you wish to do or an 'upgrade' in the field with the skate ring mounts and the M49 ring mount. DML provides two beautifully done .50 calibre M2HB machine guns and four equally well done .30 calibre Brownings, all with the correct mounts. (The .30s come with one 'rocker' mount and one similar to that used by the .50 for each one, so a maximum of three .30s can be fitted to the model.) While the sides are moulded in one piece, like the hood DML has grooved the inside and provided open space for the stowage bins if the modeller wants them opened.

While the correct folded ground tripods are included for the normal fit of two .30 and one .50 calibre machine guns, surprisingly one of the few missing options in the kit was the MWO luggage/stowage rack at the rear of the hull. Another item to note is the correct WWII taillight configuration: an oval on the left top for the taillight, a rectangle on the right top for the stop light, and two rectangles on the bottom for the combat blackout taillights. About time!

The 'cab' is neatly done, and two sets of grille mounts are included. One is for use with the 'Combat' light and the other with the 'Automotive' headlights. One of each is provided closed and one with the folding louvres removed (these have to be made from etched brass, as no plastic parts are provided for the louvres.) The model has the 'civilian' style dashboard, so note that the instruments are a brushed aluminium colour on preserved/restored vehicles and not the more common black with white numerals.

The winch and roller each come with their own bumper and accoutrements. The winch has a length of nylon string for the cable and a chain for the final hook arrangement, which matches photos of wartime models in service. Note that the driveshaft for the winch needs to be installed in Step 5!

The etched brass, as with other 'Smart Kits,' is held to a minimum, and covers the headlight guards for the 'automotive' version, mud flaps, the aforementioned engine air louvres, windshield wipers, and the sliding covers for the view slits.

Other bits include the fact it comes with the so-called 'potable' water carrier versions of the jerrycans with flip-up lids (the gas cans normally had screw-type caps with better seals). It also comes with two different types of radio sets and antenna mounts: either the SCR-508/608 type of armoured troops radio set (one on each machine gun sprue) or the more common SCR-510/610 type, racked up side-by-side rather than tuner on top of power supply.

While the model comes with three (!) Cartograf decal sheets - generic stars, generic serial and bumper code 'jungles,' and a targeted set for this kit - the markings and finishing information is somewhat Spartan. Five different vehicles are covered: an M2 in 1st Armored Division, Italy 1944 (two colour camouflage); an M2 in 1st Armored Division, Tunisia 1942 (OD with US flags on the sides); M2, generic US Army, 1941-42 (OD with stars); M2A1, XX Corps, Belgium, 1945 (two-colour camouflage); and an M2A1, generic US Army, 1941-1942 (OD with stars). I strongly suggest getting either Steve Zaloga's *US Halftracks in Action* from Concord or Jim Meske's *M3 Halftrack in Action* from Squadron/Signal as they both provide a lot of photos and good information for finishing, but there are a lot of other good books on the market covering these popular vehicles.

Overall, this is a winner and I am very happy to see that an M3/M3A1 kit is coming right behind it. Based on those two, the rest of the family will hopefully follow - M4/M21 mortar carriers, M13/M14 MGMC, T28/M15/M15A1 AA halftracks, and the various SP models with 57mm, 75mm and 105mm weapons. A great time for American modellers for a change!

Thanks to Freddie Leung for the review sample. Dragon models are imported into the UK by The Hobby Company Ltd., Garforth Place, Knoll Hill, Milton Keynes MK5 8PH. Tel: 01908 605686. Fax: 01908 605666. sales@hobbyco.net enquiries@hobbyco.net

Cookie Sewell

Price £28.99

Dragon Models Ltd., 603-609 Castle Peak Road, Kong Nam Industrial Building, 10/F, B1 Tsuen Wan, New Territories, Hong Kong. Tel: 2493 0215. Fax: 2411 0587. info@dragon-models.com www.dragon-models.com

Enigma Miniatures

Many readers will be aware of the name Raúl Garcia Latorre, the talented Spanish modeller who burst on the competition scene a few years back with his exquisite scratch built and painted figures that picked up numerous gold medals and 'Best of Show' awards. He then went on to produce his own range of figures, most of them based on the figures that he had entered into competition, under the Latorre Models label.

His most recent iteration is now into the fantasy figure world, this time under the label Enigma Miniatures.

The debut figure in this range is Yarry (EN54001), designed and sculpted by Raúl Garcia Latorre. It is a 'hobbit-type' figure with a head seemingly based on the Clint Eastwood 'Dirty Harry' character. It is a one-piece casting with a plastic 'slot' base. I must admit that I am rather taken by Yarry, he is beautifully sculpted and crisply cast and exhibits the entire belligerence portrayed by his larger human cousin. A good start to the new series! It retails at £8.15, which is an inexpensive way to introduce oneself to this new range.

The second figure, Sumothay, Prior Warrior, also designed and sculpted by Raúl Garcia Latorre, is, as the title suggests, a warrior. This kit is much more complicated, with 10 parts plus a larger plastic, slotted base. The size is equivalent to 54mm. As usual with a Latorre production, the sculpting and casting are first class. However, with so many parts, I feel a set of instructions would not have gone amiss. While this is a fantasy figure, don't think for one moment that it is an easy paint job. This figure will come alive with careful painting and I would expect to see a number of them appear in competitions in the near future. Sumothay retails at £16.35.

Airtis, the Battle Gnome (EN54003), is the third fantasy figure designed and sculpted by the busy Raúl. This is also a somewhat complicated kit with quite a few parts, although they are easier than the previous one to figure out. He's an ugly devil, our Airtis, with more weapons strapped around him than you can shake stick at. While there is the usual plastic slotted base, included is also a large rock for the battle gnome to stand on. The sculpting and casting is up to the usual high standard. Airtis retails at £16.35.

Finally, number four in the series is Ou-Schaa, Princess Driada (EN54004). With this figure, Mr Latorre has used a guest sculptor, Seth Nash, to introduce a 'female' to the new range. I say 'female' in the loosest possible terms as 'she' is tall, slim, and has a bust, but that's where the resemblance to any female that we might know definitely ends! Actually, she resembles a tree, albeit a pretty nasty one as she sports skulls from her branches and has nasty looking 'spurs' on her arms. Then again, on her planet, or alter world, she might be looked upon as a beauty…who am I to say otherwise?

Looking at the kit with a critical eye has Mr Latorre chosen well with his 'guest' sculptor? I can but say a resounding 'yes!' This is a delicate and well-sculpted piece and slots in well with the earlier ones. There are nine parts plus the usual plastic slotted base but, once again, I think I would have liked an assembly instruction sheet. If you fancy a tree-like female, this is the one for you. The Princess Driada retails at £16.35.

The Enigma fantasy figures are packed in see-through plastic clam-packs enclosing a bed of dark foam to protect the parts from damage. If fantasy figures are your thing, these latest additions to the fantasy world should definitely be on your 'wish list'. On the other hand, if you have never tried one and want to try something that allows your imagination to roam free, try one of these figures for starters, they are more fun than, well, um, painting a tree! All Enigma Miniatures figures are obtainable from Historex Agents, Wellington House, 157 Snargate Street, Dover, Kent CT17 9BZ. Tel: 01304 206720. Fax: 01304 204528.
sales@historex-agents.co.uk
www.historexagents.com
Charles Davis
Prices in text
Latorre Models, C/Voluntarios de la cruz roja 1, 29640, Fuengirola, Málaga, Spain.
info@latorremodels.com www.latorremodels.com

SDV

At the Great Scale Train Show in Timonium (Maryland) I found the same vendor from which I purchased the SVD T-55 selling the SDV kit no. 87009 of the BMP-1 1:87 scale *Limitovana Serie Bojove Vozidlo Pechoty.*

SDV is a Czech company who, like many smaller Eastern European companies, has a marketing arrangement in the West with other companies such as Modellbau Tom of Germany, who appears to offer some of their other kits in the West. (Their Tatra 813 and 815 series trucks are probably the best known.) This kit was directly imported from what I understand, as it is not marketed by Modellbau Tom nor carried in the US by Walthers.

This is a very well thought out kit of the BMP, proving 'break points to permit other variants such as the BMP-2 and the various Czech-produced vehicles to use a single set of moulds. It splits the hull just behind the engine compartment, perhaps not the best place to choose, and then provides 'drop in' hatch modules for the rear deck to match whichever variant is chosen.

Assembly is a bit odd, though, for while seats are provided for the driver and commander the hatches are moulded shut. The front deck is optional, and a simulated transmission and engine top as well as the firewall are included; apparently this is due to the fact that the driver's compartment is visible with the hatch open to the engine. The lower hull is correct - which is more than I can say about the 1:35 scale kits of the BMP - and comes with accurate five-spoke drive wheels.

The turret is the original BMP one with the 2A28 Grom 73mm gun and the AT-3 Sagger ATGM mounted on a rail above it. Again, the gunner's hatch is moulded closed. All of the rest of the BMP-1 bits are included, and although some are crude it will build up as a very nice replica of the BMP-1.

Markings and instructions for painting are extensive and cover CSSR, USSR, DDR (and FRG!), Romanian, and Polish vehicles, as well as a camouflaged Finnish one (the others are in Soviet green or Warsaw Pact grey-green.) National insignia and six sets of numbers in two sizes are included, as well as Finnish registration numbers.

Overall, this is a nice kit of sorts and is far better than its competitors - ROCO, Roskopf and Piro ones from 30 years ago or more - and half the price of the resin CMK or white metal Trident ones.
Cookie Sewell
Price US $14.50
For further info www.sdvmodel.cz or www.leestrains.com for availability and cost.

PiLiPiLi

PiLiPiLi released two new figures for Euro Militaire - one a 1:10 scale bust in the 'Belles' range and another in the 120mm First Americans' range of figures. Le-van Quang sculpted both models and both are cast in polyurethane resin.

Hopi Belle (BB-07 £25.95 + £2.95 p&p) is a maiden of the Hopi, one of the Pueblo tribes living in what is now the American South West. Quang tells us she has characteristic 'squash blossom' hair denoting her unmarried status. It is certainly an impressive hairstyle and at first glance I thought it was a style from the Far East and not from North America. Pueblo women wore black or very dark coloured dresses over which the unmarried ones wore a manta, a red and white shawl. The necklace is made from shells and turquoise - the latter a semi-precious stone and 'wampum' to some tribes of Native North Americans.

The kit has seven cast resin parts - pillar base, upper torso, head, earrings and 'squash blossom' hairpieces - or a kind of chignon on either side of the head. There are one or two moulding pips to remove, but it all fits together without any problems, though many will want to replace the pillar base with something of more generous proportions, or attach it to a larger base for better stability. The manta is cast with a roughened surface which when painted will represent the texture of homespun cloth. Pictures on the box top act as guides for painters. Collectors of the Belles' range will love 'Hopi Belle', and if you haven't tried a PiLiPiLi female bust, then this one would be a good one to start with.

Tampa Red is a Seminole warrior c.1835 at the time of the Second Florida War. The Seminole tribe originated in the 18th century from groups of southeastern Indians and runaway slaves settling on the plains of Spanish governed Florida. The Seminole fought against the forced removal from their lands in Georgia and Florida and the result was one of the costliest wars the US Government ever waged against Native North Americans.

FA-12 £34.35 + £3.95 p&p. is a 120mm figure kit comprising 18 parts cast in polyurethane resin, which includes a cast scenic base for the figure to squat upon. In addition to the box top illustration a detailed kit slip is included that gives comprehensive colour information for painters. And there is a lot to paint too! It all fits together well and needs to be put together in subassemblies to paint areas that would defeat the paintbrush when all is assembled. The figure is posed squatting as if looking down from heights onto enemy movements, his flintlock hunting rifle ready in front of him. Another 'winner' from Le-van Quang.

PiLiPiLi kits and accessories are available in the UK from Historex Agents, Wellington House, 157 Snargate Street, Dover, Kent CT17 9BZ. Tel: 01304 206720. Fax: 01304 204528. sales@historex-agents.co.uk www.historexagents.com

Ken Jones

Prices in text

PiLiPiLi, Belgradestraat 68, B-2800 Mechelen, Belgium. Pili.pili@skynet.be http://www.pilipili-miniatures.com

Andrea Miniatures

In addition to a super model of a mounted French chasseur officer c.1805, more about which in a future issue, Andrea's September releases confined themselves to two figures; a new addition to the Asterix range - a 54mm caricature of Julius Caesar (Asterix 06 £15.45 + £1.95 p&p) typical of the French TV cartoon strip and books. Cast in white metal, Julius follows pretty faithfully the style of the Asterix 'types' in stature and can be fun to paint. He looks pretty good in the round from his 'long' head and big nose down to his spindly legs and big feet.

Perhaps it would be a good idea for a youngster to have a go at this one and get started on figure painting, without too many ifs and buts. 'It must be a miniature human, anatomically correct', or any strict military constraints putting obstacles in the way of a first time painter of the piece.

The other addition to the Andrea Miniatures' range, 'War Lord Saga' is Beelphegon the Soul Reaper (WS-05 £19.95 + £1.95 p&p) posed with his right arm outstretched, fingers crooked and beckoning to some 'poor soul' to come hither ... In his left hand is a massive sword with curved quillons and a heavily-fullered broad blade. Cast in high quality white metal, the detail is sharp and the castings fit together cleanly and only a wipe of filler is needed.

With a resurgence of interest in fantasy figures amongst military modellers this one should find favour for anyone fancying a change of pace in their miniature figure painting. I don't profess to know what a lot of it is about, but I know a good piece of kit making when I see it, and this is top grade.

The kit box contains a card with an illustration of Beelphegon, plus a drawing on the reverse of the next figure tagged 'coming soon' - it's female. Also in line with Andrea practice a slip is included with general instructions on painting miniature figures.

Andrea kits and accessories are available in the UK from Historex Agents, Wellington House, 157 Snargate Street, Dover, Kent CT17 9BZ. Tel: 01304 206720. Fax: 01304 204528. sales@historex-agents.co.uk www.historexagents.com

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Prices in text

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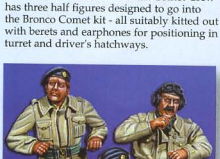
The VLS Corporation

One good thing about the crop of monthly releases from the VLS Corporation is the variety of models they produce. This time there are five new models with the Warriors' banner on the boxes - four in 1:35 scale and a 1:32 scale vignette of three figures. Bill Chilstrom designed three of the new releases - two of the 1:35 scale subjects and the three-figure WWI 1:32 scale vignette.

WA35594 is Part 2 in the series of sets comprising two 1:35 scale figures representing OIF LAV 25 Crew. These are full figures; in kit form cast in polyurethane resin and designed to stand inside the vehicle's rear hatches. WA35609 'British Comet Crew' has three half figures designed to go into the Bronco Comet kit - all suitably kitted out with berets and earphones for positioning in turret and driver's hatchways.



Brian Stewart sculpted WA35615 SS Grenadier 1944 and WA35614 SS Grenadier Firing K98 - both are standing single figures, one wearing a camouflage smock, helmet with camouflage webbing bands and aiming his Mauser Kar 98 rifle; the other wears a reversible smock and a peaked field cap, and carries a Sturmgewehr 44 - the German assault rifle.

Bill Chilstrom's 54mm (1:32 scale) vignette of a First World War Austro-Hungarian flamethrower team (WA54034) comes with the scenic base representing a revetted trench, all in kit form and cast in polyurethane resin. The flamethrower required two men to operate; one with the long nozzle projector and the other carrying the tanks on his back supplying it via supply pipes. The third figure is equipped for trench raiding with stick grenades and is in the act of throwing one. All wear respirators and steel helmets. This vignette has been eagerly awaited going by enquiries we have received from modellers who have seen it in VLS's adverts on the back cover.

Two 54mm equestrian additions to The Streets of Laredo range, sculpted by Douglas Lee, are SR54007 'Rearing Horse' and SR54008 'Horse No.2'. Both horses are in kit form and have Western saddles - and no riders! However, riders could be added to either the rearing mount or the other which is posed somewhere between a canter and a gallop. Very useful cast resin accessories for 54mm modellers.

There's only one addition to the 135th Construction Battalion range this time - CO0112 Stucco Wall Section. This has three 4.5in x 1.5in sections of cast resin, textured with a rough surface. Used singly, joined or squared they're useful for diorama or vignettes and can be suitably ruined for effect.

Additions to the Custom Dioramics series of scenic accessories are CD6134 a 1:35 scale 'Field Approach' (No.3) which, like its predecessors, is a road section with culvert walls either side. (Very useful as a display base too.) CD6145 is a 1:35 scale round scenic base representing a road section with a pipeline alongside - two pipes both with valves are probably intended as oil supply, but I suppose could be water or gas and all designed by Chris Mrosko. CD1158 is quite a large model in 1:35 scale of the front of a Dutch Town House designed by Dave Pomeranski. It's not a ruin and would make an ideal centrepiece for a diorama. Finally, Carles Elias second Russian Dwelling (CD8031) has appeared and would need a sizeable diorama base to accommodate it. Suitable for Russian scenes over the past 200 years or so it is suitable for many applications and the basis for a super diorama if used alongside the first Russian style building … However, there's probably more buildings to come!

VLS products are available in the UK from LSA Models, 151 Sackville Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 3HD, Tel/fax: 01273 705420. orders@lsamodels.co.uk www.lsamodels.co.uk or Net Merchants, Scale Model Centre, Unit 53, Ledcom Bank Road, Larne BT40 3AW. Tel: 0845 226 8266. Fax: 02828 267977 www.netmerchants.co.uk

Ken Jones
Price on application
The VLS Corporation, Lincoln County Industrial Park, 1011 Industrial Court, Moscow Mills MO63362 USA. Tel: 636-356-4888. Fax: 636-356-4877. sales@modelmecca.com www.modelmecca.com

Tasca Modellismo Co. Ltd

Tasca's 1:35 scale kit of the Sherman Mark Vc Firefly arrived more or less as we went to press. This kit has been eagerly awaited for around two years and going by what Tasca have sent us it has been worth the wait. It is not just a good kit, it is a very good kit, and some would say an excellent kit.

The kit is injection moulded in an olive green and clear polystyrene plastic, and detailed 'glue-able' plastic chevron tracks. Detail enhancements are provided for suitable parts, grilles, brackets, etc., from parts on a photo-etched fret. The tiny etched periscope guards are extremely fine and will require careful removal and handling before bending and attaching to the model. I was pleased to see that all conceivable parts for Fireflies are included. If you model a Firefly I would recommend you obtain a photograph(s) of your chosen subject and model what you see, that is if you wish your model to be correct in both fittings and markings. Some Fireflies had 'Houseboat' brackets and some did not. Some had appliqué armour panels welded on, whereas some didn't, or 'Quickfit' track brackets on the turret, and so on.

Shape and dimensions are more than acceptable and I do not quibble over the odd scale inch or two here and there. From published dimensions everything is tight enough for most of us and I have no complaints. It looks as right as any that has gone before.

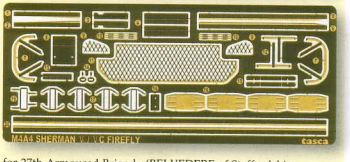
The lower hull construction is sectional and includes sponson under surfaces, an engine firewall and is so constructed that an engine could be fitted. Hull bottom details, normally invisible, conform to the published information for the lengthened hulls with the Chrysler A57 engine. The tool clips and stowage are realistic and correct. Note that the barrel clamp was fitted on the centre of the engine deck on early Fireflies and it was moved to the left side on later ones; and then some had some strange looking, tall front-mounted clamps! The three-part hull front has four separate flanges with bolts that join together to nicely represent the two bolted sections joining the three-piece nose. The transmission humps have a nice texture and cast-on reference numbers are dotted about the hull for realism. Weld seams are subtle and there is always room for enhancement.

Suspension sprues provide pressed ribbed/spoked roadwheels correct for a Firefly, with a choice of three patterns of driving sprockets, two fancy and one plain, and two idlers - spoked and pressed steel. Open spoked roadwheels are also enclosed and I'm not going to say no Firefly ever had these, because there are photographs of Fireflies fitted with them - usually partially. The suspension brackets have straight return roller brackets with packed rollers and two varieties of top skids are provided - early and late, so again, check your references. The spring-operated arms are 'damped' inside the bracket halves with rubber strips cut from a sheet supplied.

The turret is a low bustle type, in two laterally split parts, with the side port, which can be opened or closed, and the support stay is provided. The rear of the bustle on the original had a section cut out of it so the operator could reach the controls of the No.19 radio set in it's armoured box fixed to the bustle. A gun breech is not provided, but the coaxial .30 cal Browning machine gun in its entirety is. There is a lot that can be added inside the turret, however, a full size commander figure is provided that be stood in the cupola hatchway to hide most of the turret interior. With the big 17pdr breech in place you wouldn't see much else through the hatches anyway.

The 'fit' is very good. Everything is crisp and clean with positive location of the major parts.

Decals/transfers are provided for four subjects and this is the only part of the model in the short time of examination that I've found to offer a negative comment. If you want to be as near 100% correct with markings then wait for some specialist types to come along if you fancy something different to what is supplied. Cartograf in Italy prints the decal sheet and the markings given



for 27th Armoured Brigade (BELVEDERE of Staffordshire Yeomanry) are incorrect. The Seahorse on the brigade's badge is facing the wrong way and the shield is the wrong shape for vehicles. Also, BELVEDERE carried its Seahorse badge (unusually) on the bottom left of the glacis, not on the transmission cover as shown. Other than that, the rest seems fine, but I would need to check further.

We will be featuring a build up of the Tasca kit in a future issue and BELVEDERE will appear as a colour profile in a feature Peter Heath has written on the Staffordshire Yeomanry and the East Riding Yeomanry.

The kit was not on general release at the time of going to press, but the manufacturer informed me that it would be released in Japan the first week in December. Going by the home market price in Yen, expect to pay, with VAT, etc., added between £30 and £40 in the UK! It's not a cheap kit, but it's a very good one.

Ken Jones

Price tba

Tasca Modellismo Co. Ltd., 3-5-30 Toyoda, Suruga-ku, Shizuoka City, Japan 422-8027.

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- **Dragon's Cobra Halftrack**
  Steve Zaloga builds the new 1:35 scale kit of the first production M2 variant

- **'SKYRAKER'**
  Jay Laverty 'tweaks' Italeri's Crusader AA kit
- **Victoria Cross Hero**
  Peter Gillson models a figure of Charles Lucas RN
- **'A Thin Red Line'**
  Adrian Hopwood paints Latorre's Highlander bust